THE SON OF GOD,

Walking in the Fire with the

Servants of God.

IN NINE

SERMONS

Upon DAN. III. XXV.

BY

That Precious and Holy Man

Mr TIMOTHY ARMITAGE,

Late Pastor of a Congregation gathered in the City of *Norwich*.

Unto which is added another SERMON Preached by him, upon *Eccles.* 9. 16. At the Entrance of one of the Mayors there into his Office.

LONDON,

[illegible] by [illegible] *Marsh*, [illegible] *Henry Crosse*, and are [illegible] at his Shop in [illegible]

To the Reader.

THe *Prophets, do they live for ever?* as the holy Prophet *Zechariah* asks the *Question*; wherein he also implies the *Answer*, Surely they do not live for ever; which dayly experience doth bear witness unto; *For we see that wise and good men dye, as well as the foolish and brutish person*: And 'tis no small Mercy unto them (what ever it be to those who remain) that

they may rest from their Labours; yet were it not great pity that all their precious Labors should dye and be buried in the dust together with themselves? Now although that gracious and sweet-Spirited Man, Mr. *Timothy Armitage*, the late *Pastor* to a *Congregation* gathered in the City of *Norwich*, is now gone to his blessed Rest, (of whose Death it cannot be said, as 'twas of that King *Jehoram*, That *he departed without being desired*; for his absence is still very much lamented (and not without cause) unto this day: Yet through the Lords good Pro-

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vidence, some of his holy Labors that fell from him being taken up by the careful Hand of a Christian Brother of that *Congregation*, who had the Pen of a ready Writer, are here presented to the world (as some others also may, if the Lord please, in time be brought, to light) whereby such as have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil, may easily perceive what a good Treasure there was in the heart of that good man, whence such good things, both new and old, have been brought forth. I doubt not but such a sweet savour of a gracious Spirit will

ſo evidently appear all along through the Veins of theſe *Sermons*, to ſuch as are *ſpiritual*, and can ſavour ſpiritual things, as that ſhould I go about to write *Letters* of *Commendation* of *Him* or *Them*, I ſuppoſe it might be ſaid to me as the *Samaritans* ſometime ſpake unto the *Woman* that perſwaded them to come and ſee *the Chriſt*; *Now we believe, not becauſe of thy ſaying, for we have heard him our ſelves; and know that this was a moſt choice and precious Man indeed.*

And ſeeing it hath been the Lot and Portion of the *Saints*, even

even in all *Ages*, more or less to meet with manifold exercises, and sharp sufferings, in one kind or other; yea sometimes even with *Fiery Tryals*: and what afflictions may also abide us in these latter Times, the Lord only knoweth: Therefore I cannot but think, that the *Subject* of these ensuing *Sermons* (*viz.*) The *walking of the Son of God with his Servants in the midst of the Fire*) may be very seasonable and comfortable to all the Servants of *Christ*, even in these and the after times. What this our *Dear* and *Reverend Brother* spake herein; was (as it seems) that

which he had the experience of not long before, having (as I am told) but newly come out of the *Furnace*; I mean a most violent hot burning *Fever*: so that there is the more cause to hope, that what came from his own heart, may (through the Blessing of (*Christ*) go to the Hearts of others also.

If any seeming Pleonasms, or Redundances, or deficiency in any Phrases or words may appear to any herein, let them please but to consider, that these *Sermons* are put forth not by the Authors own *Notes*; which (as it seems) are very hardly to be read, but as they were

were taken from his Mouth in Preaching. I shall only crave leave to mention one passage, lest possibly any might seem to stumble or be offended at it, *viz.* That about the suppressing of Errors, in *pag.* 118, 119. as if he did absolutely deny the exercise of the Magistrates Power in any such matters, or in any case whatsoever; Whereas if his Expressions be candidly taken, as they may, *viz.* That the Sword or Power of the Magistrate is not to be exercised against any Person meerly for the very holding of an Error, if no more, without any manner of Civil distur-

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bance or circumstances of that Nature (for he speaks not at all of any such holding & spreading of Errors) I know not any that will, or can affirm or maintain the contrary, and so take any just offence at the Expression. I shall add no more, but desire that the Blessing of Christ may accompany these holy Labors.

13d. 7m. 56.

THO. ALLEN.

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THE

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First Sermon,

On Dan. III. XXV.

He answered and said, Lo I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

THE School of Discipline, which God trains up his Children in, seemeth to have very severe Statutes, and strict Orders that are not joyous to the flesh but they are exceeding profitable for the Spirit: there is no School in the world, in which there is more to be learned, the *Lord Jesus* himself is the head Master in this School,

who learned obedience perfectly by the things that he ſufferd, and ſo he knew how to teach his School (as I may ſay) the *Lord Jeſus* will teach his Scholars all kind of weapons, that they may be fit for all aſſaults; he will make them good at any exerciſe, before he leave them: In the 11. of *Hebrews*, you have a Role of the ſeveral exerciſes they were put upon, beginning at the 36. verſe, *Others had tryals of cruel mockings and ſcourgings, yea moreover of bonds and impriſonments, they were ſtoned, they were ſawn aſunder, were tempted, were ſlain with the ſword, they wandred about in ſheeps skins, and goats skins, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented*; and he teaches them how to conquer all theſe: The Apoſtle here doth ſpeak of theſe as Conquerors through faith, in the verſes foregoing ſee what glorious Conqueſts they had: In the 33,34. verſes *Who through faith, ſubdued Kingdomes, wrought Righteouſneſs, obtained promiſes, ſtopped the mouths of Lyons, quenched the violence of fire, eſcaped the edge of the ſword; out of weakneſs were made ſtrong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the Armies of the Aliens*: Here are glorious victories that the Saints had through faith; over all the evil that they met with in the world: you have an inſtance of this in the Text. In the Chapter where the Text is, you ſhall read there of three Schollars of *Jeſus Chriſt*, that were put to hard exerciſes, they were put to it, to grapple with the flames of fire; and they had all manner of diſadvantage; and yet they went on Conquerors; they had to deal with the wrath of the King, *He was exceeding wrath, and his countenance changed*: They had to deal with the flames of fire, and flames that were made ſeven times hot-

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ter, than ordinary: So *the King gave commandment* (as you read in the 19. verse, *that they should heat the Furnace seven times hotter than ordinary*: Again, *they were bound hand and foot*; for so the King gave commandment in the 20, 21. *verse. And they took them and bound them, and cast them bound into the Furnace*; yet the Lord he made his servants Conquerors, notwithstanding all their disadvantages. You have in the Text, the confession of the very enemies themselves; the King said, *Did I not cast three men bound into the Furnace?* and *Lo I see four men walking? I see four men walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt*: So then in the Text you have witness given by the mouth of an enemy, unto that great deliverance that God wrought for his three Servants: *Lo* said the King himself, *I see four men loose*, &c. where, take notice of the several wonderful things, that God wrought for these three children: See how many wonders there were in this deliverance of theirs.

The first Wonder in the deliverance of the three Children.

First of all, there was this wonder, That the light of the fire continued, and not the heat, so as to work upon them; this seems to be a great Miracle; that *light* and *heat* should be seperated from the *fire*; there was light; the King saw them walking in the midst of the fire, and yet that fire did not burn: I say, this could not be done without a great Miracle: Truth is, they shall be separated in Hell; light shall be separated from the flames of Hell: When God will shew and testifie the greatness of his wrath upon the disobedient; there will be heat, but no light, flames there shall be burning, and yet there

shall be nothing but utter darkness: Now when God will shew a Miracle of Mercy to his Servants here upon earth, God so disposeth and orders it, that there shall be light and no heat.

The Second Miracle. Secondly, There was this Miracle, that their number was not diminished, but increased: *Lo I see four men*, saith the King; Did we not cast in three, and *lo I see four*? They had thought to cut off at once, all that were disobedient to the sinful command of the King; they had thought that the flames would have consumed them all three, that there should not have been one left: behold their number is increased; since they begun to suffer, their number is increased, they have a fellow Martyr, a fellow sufferer, that is in the midst of them.

The Third Miracle. Again Thirdly, Here was this Wonder, this Miracle, That the fire did burn their bones asunder, but did not hurt them: *I see four men loose*, says the King, *did we not cast three men bound into the furnace, and lo I see four men loose*? And what a wonderful work of God was this, that the flames that were prepared to devour them, should help them, that the flames should burn their bonds, and not hurt them?

Again Fourthly, Here was yet another Miracle, that these men were seen *walking in the midst of the fire*: The fire was prepared to be a Torment to them; but the Lord made it a sweet walking fire: that which was intended to torment them, it becomes a blessing to them; they were walking each with other, and lifting up the Name of the Lord, in the midst of the fire.

The Fifth Miracle. Fifthly, Here was this Miracle, That the fire should remain fire, and yet it *should not hurt* [illegible]

I see four men loose walking in the midst of the fire, say's the King; So that the fire was still fire; it was not quenched; some conceive that the Angel did quench the heat of the fire, with some sweet dew, or by some fresh gale; but the Text saith, they were in the midst of the fire: now here is the wonder; that it should be *fire*, and *yet not burn*; the heat of the fire was not absent from the fire at this time; for the fire did burn their bonds after they were in the midst of the fire, after they were fallen down: So then it was fire, and when they were in the midst of the fire it burnt their bonds, and they had no hurt; so that the burning faculty of the fire was not taken away, but only the art of it was suspended for the present, by the Mighty Power of God.

Sixtly, Here was another Miracle, that they should be in the midst of the fire, and have not the least hurt, that the fire should not reach to the hair of their head, or that the smell of the burning should not be upon their clothes: *I see them walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt*: that fire that burnt the men that cast them into the fire, did not them the least hurt. *The Sixth Miracle.*

Seventhly and Lastly, That one was among them that was like the Son of God: Now what doth *Nebuchadnezzar* mean by these words? Had this King any knowledge of the Son of God, of the Incarnation of Christ? it was likely he had not, he was still an Heathen and still he worshipped his Idols; but only he was convinced thus far, that the fourth man that was among them, was was more then a man: there was some extraordinary glory and splendor; some Divine Majesty *The Seventh Miracle.*

did appear in his countenance, which did convince him that he was more than a man; and so he calls him the Son of God, but yet without all doubt this was the Son of God, that was among them; it was none other but Jesus Christ, he came down to rescue, he came down to deliver, he came down to walk with his Servants in the Furnace; here he fulfilled his promise, *When thou goest through the fire, I will be with thee*:

Object. *But you will say, Jesus Christ was not yet come in the flesh, Christ had not yet taken the nature of man upon him; and therefore how could this be the Son of God?*

Answ. I Answer 'Tis true, Christ was not then come in the flesh, he had not taken a body; that body that he did appear in, it was not the body Jesus Christ hath now in Heaven; it was not united Hypostatically unto his Person, it was not that flesh he took afterward, and in which he now appears before his Father for us: But yet the Son of God did sometime take up a body; yea many a time, in which he appeared oftentimes to the *Patriarks* in the old Testament; as to *Abraham*, and *Jacob*; and to *Moses*, and many others.

Object. *But you will say What bodies were these that the Son of God did assume and take up? Whether were they the bodies of men, or no?*

Answ. I Answer It is most probable they were bodies that were created: The Son of God when he appeared to the *Patriarks*, when he appeared to any of his Servants, he had power to create himself a body at any time, to make a body of nothing, and so to dissolve it in a moment to nothing, as to make it in a moment, so to dissolve it

it in a moment; and thus did the Son of God appear in the midst of these three Children, that it might be a sign unto them, and to the Church First, That the Son of God should afterward come and take the nature of man: That he should come in the flesh to rescue the souls of his people, from the flames of the wrath of God; that he should come to deliver them from Hel & destruction.

Secondly, That he would be with his people in all Furnaces of Tribulations; that when they walk through the fire, and through the water, he will be in the midst of them: And thus you see a great deal of Mercy, and a great deal of Miracle is in this Deliverance which God wrought for these his Sons: There are very many Observations that the words will afford us; but I shall not stand to name them, least the time prevent me, but shall close with one Point: And that is this,

Observ. *That the Lord doth oftentimes in a wonderfull manner, rescue the lives of his Servants from death and destruction.* I say the Lord doth oftentimes in a wonderful manner, rescue the lives of his Servants from death and destruction: 'Tis very evident in the Text: I shall point you to some Instances out of the word of the *Lord* that shall clear up this truth to you, and confirm it: Therefore it is that the Lord shews his wonders in the deep, that he might rescue the lives of his Servants from destruction: he hath discovered the foundations of the great *Waters*, and made a path in the midst of them, for the ransomed of the Lord to go thorow: Thus did the *Lord* rescue the lives of the *Israelites*, when the *Egyptians* pursued them; as you read in the fourth of *Exod.* latter end

What restraints God lays upon the creatures, that he might rescue the lives of his Servants.

First Water.

Secondly,

Secondly, Fire, Secondly. Sometimes God hath laid a restraint upon *fire*, as well as upon the water: He hath given command ment to the flames not to harm his Servants; For this, you see it cleer in the Text, they walked in the midst of the fire, and they had no hurt; they were neither choaked with the smoak, nor their bodies consumed by the fire; for the Lord had laid a restraint upon the fire.

Thirdly, Bruit beasts. Thirdly, Sometimes God hath given command to the very *bruit Beasts*, not to hurt his people: He hath rescued the lives of his Servants from the paw of the Bear, and the mouth of the Lyon: you read in this Book of *Daniel*, the first of *Dan.* what Command God gave there, concerning *Daniel* when he was cast into the Lyons Den, in *Dan* 6. 22. *My God*, saith he, *hath sent his Angel and hath shut up the Lyons mouths, that they have not hurt me*: what a wonderful work was this, that the ravenous Lyons should not eat the flesh, that was set before them?

Fourthly, Sea. Again sometime we finde; That God hath laid a restraint upon the devouring *Sea-Monster*; upon the great *Leviathan*; and God hath given commandment to that, not to hurt his Servants; This you have cleer in *Jonah*; you read in *Jonah*, that the Lord prepared a Whale to swallow him up; God delivered him from two deaths at once; from the Sea and from the *Whale*; and in the second of *Jonah*, the last verse, God gave commandement to set the Prisoner at liberty, God spake to the Whale, and the Whale set *Jonah* on dry land.

Fifthly, violent men. Again, You shall finde that God hath laid restraint upon *violent men*, that they have not been

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able to take away their lives; *He rebuked even Kings for their sakes; Touch not mine Anointed, and do my Prophets no harm*: you know what command God gave to *Laban*, and what restraint he laid upon *Esau*, concerning *Jacob* in *Gen.* 31, 33. though it was in the heart of *Laban* to destroy him, and though *Esau* came out with an intention to take away his life; the Lord laid a restraint upon them.

Again, Sometimes you shall finde that God hath laid a restraint upon *dead*y *Diseases*, upon violent sicknesses, such as would have been destructive to the bodies of his Servants, God hath laid a restraint upon them; that though violent Diseases and Distempers, have pulled down his Servants from their strength, to great weakness, to the grave; God hath given command that they should not destroy them: And thus God dealt with *David* and with *Hezekiah*, and *David* doth acknowledge it in the 30. *Psalm.* 3. saith he, *O Lord thou hast brought up my soul from the grave, thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit*: He was at the very grave, and he Lord delivered him; and then a remarkable instance you have of *Hezekiah*: at the 38. of *Isa.* at the beginning of the Chapter, there is the very sentence of death gone out against him, and a deadly Disease seizes upon *Hezekiah*, he was gone and quite gone, by the course of nature; he could not have lived, and yet the Lord rescues his life; as you shall read in that Chapter, at the fift verse. *Sixthly upon deadly Diseases.*

Again, Sometimes you shall finde that God hath laid a restraint upon the very *Devil* himself: *Seventhly, upon the Devil.*

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and hath given him a charge that he should not meddle, nor touch the lives of his Servants; and thus God dealt with *Job* as you may see in the second of *Iob*; there the Divel sought after nothing more then the life of *Iob*, fain would he have had his life; but God would not grant it, in the 6. verse of that Chapter, in the 5. verse, saith Satan, *Put forth thy hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face*, verse. 6. And the Lord Answered, *Behold he is in thine hand, only save his life*: There is nothing the Divel thirsts more after, then the taking away the precious life; and therefore he set upon *Christ* with this temptation, *If thou beest the Son of God, cast thy self down*; and so the Devil doth set upon many of the poor Servants of God many times with this Temptation, Cast thy self down; make away thy self; and take away thine own life: Yet the Lord is pleased to lay a restraint upon him, and keep up his people, notwithstanding all those stormes and temptations and they are yet in the land of the living; and thus you see what care God takes for the lives of his Servants; and in what a wonderful manner he doth sometime rescue them from death and destruction.

But you will say, What end hath God in this? Wherefore doth God do this?

The first ground of the Point.

First of all, and above all, in respect of his own Name; He respects his own glory in it, therefore he suffers his people to be brought into such great straits and low conditions, as none but God can deliver thence; He suffers them to be brought down sometime, even to the very dust; that it may appear that none can deliver but God, that doth

doth raise from the dead, and call things that are not, as if they were: Now Gods name is glorified these 3. ways, by such kind of deliverances as these.

First of all, God doth thereby draw forth great praises from his people: I say such deliverances draw forth great praises from his people: When God gives great mercies into the hands of his people, he is pleased to put high praises into the mouths of his Servants: in Ps. 149. at the 5. and 6. v. *Let the Saints be joyful in glory, let them sing aloud upon their beds: Let the high praises of God be in their mouth*: Now my brethren, know this; That there is nothing on earth, that God doth more delight in, then in the praise of his people; he is pleased to account it as a glory done to him; *Who so offereth praise glorifieth me*, and therefore it is that God is said, to *dwell in the praises* of his people: See that expression in the 22 *Psalm*. it is an expression of *Christ* in his Agony, 22 3. v. *Oh thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel*! To inhabit the praises of *Israel*, 'tis one of the most glorious Titles that is given to God; *O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel*: The Lord delights more in the praises of *Israel*, then in all the world beside; He delights there more then in Heaven, if it were not for the presence of his Son; therefore it is one of the dwellings of God, the praises of his people: Great Princes and Nobles, have their several Palaces, so hath God; sometime they leave the City, and go into the Country, and places of Recreation: Why, thy Lord he is said sometime to come down among his people, and he is pleased to dwell there, that he may refresh himself in the praises of his people: 'Tis a

How Gods Name is glorified in delivering of his Servants.

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house that God doth delight to dwell in for ever and for ever: when Faith shall cease, and Prayers shall cease, the Praises of the Saints, the *Hallelujahs* shall never cease, but the Saints shall compass the Throne round about with their Praises, with their Songs, with their *Hallelujahs*, and there shall God delight to dwell, there shall God delight to inhabit for ever; and therefore because that God doth thus delight in the praises of his people, he works great deliverances, that so he may greatly draw forth the praises of his people; that their hearts may be abundantly inlarged to him: He will work such deliverances, as there shall be a great deal of God in them, that so their hearts may be greatly drawn forth in praises to God.

2. Again, God gets himself the glory in the second place, by *confuting the blasphemies of the enemies*; and therefore 'tis that God doth carry on such works of deliverance, that he may stop the mouth of enemies, and confute all their blasphemies: When God brings his people into a low condition, many times enemies they rise high in their blasphemies against God and his people; sometimes they cry out, where is now thy God? and sometimes they condemn the generation of the righteous, and judge rashly, as those in *Act.* 28. did of *Paul*, when they saw the Viper on his hand they said among themselves, *No doubt this man is a murderer, whom though he hath escaped the Sea, yet vengeance suffereth him not to live*: Now God many times he works great deliverance, that he may confute the enemies of the Saints, that they shall see if they will not willfully blinde their eyes:

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they shall see that God was in the generation of of the righteous; in the Psalm. 126. v. 2. you may see these, God he made the very Heathen to confess, that God was with his people; and that he had done great things for them: *Then said they among the Heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them*; The *Lord hath done great things for them.*

Thirdly, God brings glory to his Name, by such kinde of Deliverances; for he makes it appear that he hath the sole prerogative over the times of men, and over the lives of men; he will make it appear, that the times of his creatures, are in his hand, and not in their own hand, and not in the hand of enemies. Above all things in the world, God is said to keep this in his hand, the times of men, and the lives of men: See what *Daniel* says to *Nebuchadnezzar*, in *Dan.* 5. 23. And the *God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified*: See here, the breath that is in mans Nostrils, it is in Gods hand, and he can withdraw it when he please; thy breath, 'tis in his hand, and he will dispose of it, he keeps it in his hand, and he will not give it out of his hand: and therefore when any life is communicated to any creature, 'tis given him of God: *Job*, he will acknowledg this, that his life was given out by way of favour, and free grace: *Job* 10. 12. *Thou hast granted me life and favour*: See here he doth acknowledge it, that the giving out of his life, 'tis Gods prerogative: 'Tis granted of God; Princes they grant such and such a favour: so life and favour is granted of God; He will keep it in his own hand, He will not make

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any Leaſe and Tearm to any man living, they ſhall have it from Moment to Moment; the creatures ſhall have their lives from Moment to Moment; but for any tearm, God will not, that ſhall be at his own diſpoſing: and therefore the Lord hath exerciſed wrath and anger, when the creature hath gone about to make this their prerogative, to promiſe life to themſelves, and grant life to themſelves; You know what is ſaid of the *fool* in the Goſpel, when he had been very prodigal, he would make many promiſes to himſelf: *Soul*, ſaith he, *thou haſt goods laid up for many years*: why how doth God take this? why he is called *fool* for his labour; he reckons without the Landlord and therefore God he comes and turns him out of his Farm: *Thou fool*, ſaith God, *this night ſhall thy ſoul be taken from thee*; 'tis Gods only prerogative; he makes it appear ſo, the giving out of life is in his hand: and therefore it is ſaid in the Scripture, that the *Iſſues from death, belong to God*: See that place in the 68. Pſal. v. 20. Tis our *God that is the God of ſalvation*, and unto the Lord *belongeth Iſſues from death*: Iſſue, that is the way that God leads to death and from death; The Door, the Gates of death, both to and fro, they belong to God, to the Son of God, he keeperh the door: *Behold*, ſaith he, *I have the keys of Hell and death*; ſo that the Iſſues to death belong to him; He ſhuts the door when he pleaſeth; and the Iſſues of death belong to him: he opens the door when he pleaſeth: Sometime a man hath this conceit of himſelf; well, I am brought lower and weaker, waſted and decayed in my ſtrength and in my body; but there is ſuch a means as will

surely help me: such a Friend, such a Physician, they will certainly help me: if it were not for them I should despair, there is my hope: why you are deceived, saith God, I will have you know that I keep thee door of life, and the Issues of life belong to me: if God shut the door of life, man cannot get back again, notwithstanding all his friends; Again, sometime a man is brought low, that friends give him over, and then we say he is gone; all means are used, and none effectual, and we say, surely there is no hope for him to come back again: You are mistaken, saith God, I will have you to know that the Issues of life come from me: and I will open a door for life, and say, life come back again: and thus God makes it appear, that the Issues of life belong to him, and that is for his glory: That is the first ground of the Point.

Secondly, God doth work such Deliverance for his Servants, that so he may afford great *matter of rejoicing*, both to themselves and to others. I say, that he may afford great matters of rejoycing, great Mercies, and great Deliverances, they commonly bring along with them great joy; 'tis not only a Mercy, but a Duty: great Mercies, call for great joy: See it was their duty, in *Psal.* 126. 1, 2, 3. *When the Lord turned again the Captivity of Sion, we were like them that dreamed, then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our Tongue with singing: Then said they among the Heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them, the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad*, or rejoyce. The Spirit of joy, 'tis the life of Heaven, 'tis the inheritance that the Saints shall have there:

Second Ground of the Point.

there: *Well done good and faithful Servant, enter into thy Masters joy*: Now God, whilest they are upon earth, he will cause part of that joy to enter into them: that they shall have some of that joy, now have a little taste of the joy of Heaven whilest they are here upon earth: therefore God he will will work such deliverance for his people, that they may see much of the glory of God in the Mercy: much of the glory of God in the Deliverance, that so they may have their hearts lift up to rejoyce in God: Yea Again, God will have others to rejoice with them; and therefore some Mercies are spreading Mercies: such a Mercy as God gave to *Sara*; See *Gen* 21. 6. And *Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear, will laugh with me*, her own affection was too narrow to rejoyce in the goodness of God: and therefore I say, God many times he gives out such Mercies, such Deliverances, that they shall be spreading Mercies: the joy and the sweetness of them shall spread abroad, and his people shall say, we rejoyce in the goodness of the Lord; and all the people that fear his Name, shall rejoyce with us: That's the second Ground.

Third Ground of the Point.

Thirdly, God he works such Deliverances for his people, that so he might strengthen their confidence for the future, that he might encourage their hearts, and the hearts of many that trust in the Lord, that whensoever they are brought down into low conditions, they might look back and see what God did sometime for them: See what the Psalmist saith, in *Psalm.* 77. see what a help this was, when he was in a low condition; the 77. *Ps.* v. 10. *Then said I, It is my infirmity, but I*

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will remember the years of the right hand of the most High. I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High: I will remember those days, those years when God did by his Mighty Hand, save and deliver me: This is an encouragement for the future, to trust in God; he saved me at such a time, at such a low condition: Oh he was there, the right hand of the Lord was stretched out to deliver; and why should we ever distrust the Lord again? surely that power of the Lord can never be nonplust, that hath wrought such great things for me, Thus you see the Grounds: Here is no time for Application. I shall adde a fourth Particular, and that is this which will yet make the Point more useful, before I leave it: What doth God require of his people, when he works such Deliverances for them? And how should the Servants of the Lord expresse their thankfulness for such Mercies, when God doth so and so rescue the lives of his people?

What God requires when he works such mercies for his people? and how the Servants of the Lord should expresse their thankfulness for such Mercies received.

First of all, Take heed that we neither forget the Mercy, nor the God of the Mercy. I say, forget not the Mercy, nor the God of the Mercy; we are very apt to look upon our mercies with a slight eye; we remember our wormwood and our gall, but we forget our mercies, and the goodness of the Lord that did shine in the Mercy: Now know, that there is a great provocation to the Lord: It was the sin of *Israel*, that they forgot so soon what God had done for them: we read of this, how they provoked the Lord and they turned back, saith the Psalmist; and you shall see how God did take it as a great provocation, and God threatens them for it: See how they forgot

what God had done for them; *Psal.* 106. 13. *They soon forgat his works, they waited not for his Counsel*, and verse 21. *They forgat God their Saviour which had done great things in Egypt*; and therefore the Lord was wroth with them. Brethren, so should we take heed that we do not forget our Mercies, and forget the God of the Mercie; forget not what God is, and forget not what God hath done for us: forget not what God requires of us: Did God remember us in low conditions, and shall we forget him? shall we forget him when he hath raised us up? will not this be horrible ingratitude? does the Lord remember us continually, and shall we forget him? Oh! we should get a remembrance of God, and a sense of God, and the goodness of the Lord, written in our hearts: Where doth God write the name of his people? Why he writes their names there, where he will not forget them: why see what the Lord says in *Isa.* 49. *vers* 15, 16. *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her wombe? they may forget, yet will I not forget thee*; Vers 16. *Behold I have graven thee upon the Palmes of my hands*: See what care God takes, that he might not forget his people; and so he would have us not to forget his Mercies: *Behold I have engraven thee upon the palmes of my hands*; When a man would not forget his friend, he will ingrave his name upon a Ring; but you will say, he will not forget, that doth not only write it upon a Ring, but upon his own flesh: And thus the Lord deals with you, *Behold I have engraven you upon the palmes of my hands*; and doth the Lord thus take

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care to remember us: Let not us forget him.

Secondly, we should not look with a slight eye upon great Mercies: Oh view the Mercy, compass the Mercy, go round about it, tell the Towers, and see the Bulwarks, see what Mountains of goodness and mercie shine in them! Oh see how the Attributes of God do shine in them! God cannot indure that people should despise affliction, his Chastisements; *My son despise not the chastening of the Lord*, he cannot abide when men are careless, when they are sleighty under affliction; and surely he will not endure that men should look sleightly upon mercies: *My son despise not the goodness of the Lord, the mercies of the Lord, the deliverances of the Lord*; Let not them be looked upon with a sleighty eye, look into the height of the Mercy, and the depth of the Mercy, and all the evil that would have befallen us, if we had not enjoyed the Mercy.

And Thirdly, Take heed that we give nothing to creatures, but all to the free grace of God; this God he requires in thankfulness, when he gives such Deliverances; ascribe nothing to men, nothing to our selves, nothing to our prayers, nothing to our faith: No, give all to God, give all to free grace; look upon *Job*, take him for an instance, in the 9. of *Job* v. 16. *If I had called and the Lord had answered, if he had given me my Petition*; given me what I desired, yet *I would not* (a) *he hath hearkened to my voice*: I would not say it for my prayers, or for my faith: No, I am poor dust and ashes, what's my voice in Heaven? No, sure I will give all to him: I will say, surely the Lord hath heard his own voice, the voice of his

free grace, pleading for me, he hath heard the voice of his Spirit pleading in me, and the voice of his Son, making Intercession for me: I will not say the Lord hath heard me; but that the Lord may teach his people this; he gives Mercies before they have thoughts to seek them: as in *Psal.* 21. 3. Yea, sometime God, he hath exceeded the faith of his people, to let them see that it was not for the worthiness of their faith, though when God would give Mercies: Many times he sees his people a praying and beleeving, but he doth not give mercies for these. And therefore God he doth prevent their faith; as you may see in *Psal.* 126. *verse* 1. *When the Lord turned again the Captivity of Sion, then were we like to them that dreamed*; like to them that dream; as much as to say, When the Lord brought us back, we had not faith enough to beleive it, we could not think that the Mercy was real; when as we came out of *Babylon*, we doubted whether we should believe it or no, whether it was real or a dream: It was real, but it was not for their faith; and therefore ascribe nothing to faith, nothing to means, nothing to prayer, but all to the free grace of God.

Again Fourthly, we should give back again to God, what God lends us: That is the Fourth way to express Thankfulness: Hath God given us life, let us give it back again to him: Hath God given us strength? we should give it back again to God: we should lay out all our strength for God: Improve it for God, and be willing to suffer for God.

Again Fifthly, in the fift place, We should be willing

to lay down our lives when God calls for them again: Thus should we expreſs our thankfulneſs for life given us; I ſay, be willing to lay down life freely and voluntarily, the next time when God calls. When God hath reſcued any of our lives from the grave, why all thoſe days that are added, are freely given, and 'tis an addition of free grace, more then we thought of, more then was expected: And therefore we ſhould freely be willing to lay it down when God calls for it. We ſhould be willing to lay down our own lives and let them depart; and ſo friends ſhould be freely willing to let that life go, that was ſo freely redeemed: Thus we ſhould be Volunteers to death, we ſhould freely and willingly ſubmit to God, as well as dye in obedience, as in faith, and let it be our wiſdom, often to look to what Chriſt hath done for his people, in matter of death and the grave; and let faith on work every day; to ſee how the ſting is taken out by Chriſt; and the grave is made a ſweet reſting place: 'tis ſanctified, 'tis perfumed, 'tis ſanctified that it may be a ſweet reſting place to the Saints.

Again, in the Sixt place, When God hath wonderfully ſaved our lives, we ſhould ſeek to do ſomething extraordinary for God; we ſhould not content our ſelves with ordinary ſervice, ſaith Chriſt, *What do you more then others?* in the 5. of *Mat.* and the latter end; if you onely love thoſe that love you, what do you more then others? or what ſingular thing do you? he would have his people do ſome ſingular thing for him: and eſpecially when God hath done ſome ſingular thing for them: and what ſays *Hezekiah*, when

God had restored his life from the grave, in *Isa.* 38. v. 19. *The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day*: The living, the living, he shall praise thee, he that hath life once given, and he that hath life restored to him again; he that hath life given from the grave: *The living, the living, he shall praise thee*: *he shall speak of thy glory, and celebrate thy wonders*: Something more then ordinary is implyed there; That the living, he should live to God.

Seventhly, In the last place to conclude: Look upon all outward Mercies, in reference to some spiritual Mercy, and never take up in the outward Mercy, but let it lead you to the spiritual mercy: Alas what is life if it be not in reference to spiritual Mercies? if it be not in reference to get more of God, to get more glory to God: Life, what is it? a poor empty thing: 'tis true, life it self is a mercy, a great Mercy; but yet though life be a blessing, a man may dye betimes and be blessed: *Blessed are the dead that dye in the Lord*: And on the contrary, though life be a blessing, a man may live long, and be a cursed creature for all this; See what is said in the Prophesie of *Isaiah* the 65 *ch.* 20. *v.* 'tis spoken of the days of the Gospel: *There shall be no more thence an Infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; For the child shall dye a hundred years old; but the sinner being a hundred years old, shall be accursed*: 'Tis a prophecy of Gospel blessings; shewing how it should be in the latter days: a child dye a hundred years old: That is, the young men shall have abundance of the glory of God: those that are children in years, shall be old in grace, they shall

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have as much grace as those that were a hundred years old: and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed; a curse, though he live a hundred years: See then, life is not desireable, but in reference to spiritual Mercies: Oh then rest not in outward Mercies: if God at any time hath given any of your lives for a prey, rest not in outward Mercies, but labour to see further Mercie in it: that mercy is given in reference to further Mercy; and waite for the Communication of it: It was well when *Hezekiah* could say that *God had done it in love to his soul*, in *Isa.* 38. 17. *Thou hast in love to my soul, delivered it from the Pit of corruption, for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back:* He looked more to the spiritual Mercy, then to the outward Mercy: Alas, it had been a poor small thing for life to be given, and my sins not pardoned; if God had given me life, and not given it out of love; Oh it had been a curse to my soul: and this doth *David* blesse the Lord for, in *Psal.* 23. 3. *He restoreth my soul, he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for his name sake:* It was after God delivered him from sickness, he blesse God, he restored my soul and my life, he doth not take up there, but *he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name sake:* I have further mercy, my life is given for further Mercy: God he will not restore that mercy of life only, but he will convey me to further Mercy, seeing he hath given me life, he will lead me in the paths of righteousness, that I may life to the praise of his name. And this should all our desires be, when God doth such great things for us.

THE Second Sermon,

On Dan. III. XXV.

He answered and said, Lo I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

IN Made entrance into the words the last Lords day, There is witness and testimony given of a glorious Miracle and Wonderful Deliverance that was wrought for three servants of God. God had brought them forth to exercise their faith: And to suffer; To suffer the wrath of the King, but yet the Lord delivered them, he delivered them from the wrath of the King; he wa-

a violent King; from the flames of the Furnace, and the Furnace was heated seven times hotter then ordinary: they were bound hand and foot, and cast into the midst of the fire; and yet they became Conquerors: The very enemies do witness as much: *The King Answered and said, lo I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire*: Here are many Miracles in one; here is heat and light separated one from the other: light remains and yet the heat is taken away, and so burned not, here is the wonder of mercy; it shall be a miracle of judgment in Hell, there is fire that hath heat, but no light: the hotter the flames are, it shall be the darker, it shall be dark that day; but here when God will shew a Miracle of mercy, he takes away the heat, and the light remains: *Lo*, says the King, *I see four men, &c.* Imagine, their number is increased, as another Miracle: Whereas they thought that the flames should devour them all: and lo their number is increased since they began to suffer: there were but three cast in, and now there are four. Again, these four men were loose. And there is another Miracle, they were cast in bound, with their Cords, and Chains, and Fetters, but what ever they were, they were dissolved: See hear, God makes the very fire to fight for them to loose them, to set them at liberty from death: Again, they were walking in the midst of the fire; there is another Miracle: The Adversaries thought it should have been a place of torment to them: but lo, it proves to them a place of pleasure: 'tis to them a sweet walking place: They walk together, and confer together, and praise the Lord together; and that's another

Wonder:

Wonder: Again, To walk in the fire, that the fire should be fire, and should not burn them: It was still fire, the fire was not put out, as some imagine, but the fire did remain fire: So the Text saith, they were in the midst of the fire; and the fire remained fire: and the fire did consume their bonds, they fell down in the midst of the fire, and their *bands were burned by the fire*: that the fire should continue fire, and that the Lord should suspend the burning act of it, that it should not burn them; here was another Wonder: Again, they had no hurt, the flames consumed their Adversaries, and there was not so much as a hair of their head scotched, not so much as the smell of burning upon their clothes: Besides, the Son of God was among them; there were four, and the form of the fourth was like the Son of God: It was the Son of God, Christ took a body, he made himself a body when he pleased: He came down to walk with them, to refresh them, to deliver them: Here was held forth what Christ would be to his people, that he would deliver them; that he should come to do his Fathers work, here was the promise fulfilled, that Christ would be with his people in every fiery tryal, in every affliction, and in every Tribulation: The Son of God, he came down, and he makes a fellow sufferer in all their affliction: So he makes good his promise to his people, that *if they go through the fire and water, he will be with them*: The Point insisted upon, is this:

The observation insisted upon ¶

That God doth sometimes in a most visible manner, reserve the lives of his Servants from death and destruction. He layes a restraint sometimes upon the

waves

waves of the Sea, they shall not take away the lives of his people: You know *Israel* went through the red Sea; and the Lord did lay a restraint upon the fire sometimes. So in the Text, and sometime the Lord did lay a restraint upon the tribes of the Sea; so in the case of *Jonah*: and sometime the Lord did lay a restraint upon the devouring beasts, the Lions, their mouths were shut up, they could not eat the flesh that was set before them, when *Daniel* was cast into their Den: He laid a restraint upon violent men in the world: He laid a restraint upon violent sicknesses and diseases; *Herod* was devoured, and so was *Herodias*, when the sentence of death was gone out: He laid a restraint upon the very Devil himself: *Behold he is given into thy hand, only save his life*: and God he doth this of his own accord, to be lift up, to be the praise of his people, and that it may unanswerably confute the blasphemies of enemies, he delights in the praises of his people: *Oh thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.* God comes many times out of Heaven to refresh himself with the praises of his people: He delights to dwell there; it is the House that God will take up into all eternity, the Saints shall compass the Throne with *Hallelujahs*; and there shall God be praised. Again, God he will give great matter of rejoycing to his people, and therefore he works great Deliverance many times, though they cannot whilest they are here on earth; They cannot enter into their Masters joy, yet their Masters joy enters into them: *When the Lord turned again our Captivity, then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with rejoycing.* I come to the Application of the Point: It is to that God doth in

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The Application of the Point. a wonderful manner rescue the lives of his Servants from death and destruction: It let us see,

Use 1. First of all, That the lives of the Saints are precious in the eyes of God, they are Jewels that God will not easily part with, that he might have great Incomes of glory. He will not part with them: See what is said in *Psal.* 116. v. 15. *Precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of his Saints*, not that God delights in the death of his Saints: he means their lives are precious, and therefore their life shall not be taken from them, but upon good ground; they are very precious in his sight: the Lord knows that he hath the greatest Income of glory that way; yea all the glory that God hath in this visible world, is by the lives of his Saints: if it were not for them God should have none to lift up his name in the world, he should have none to make his name glorious here, he should have none to pay him rent for all his great Farm: the world now, that would be a great loss if God should loose all his Rent in the world: the men of the world, they pay God no Rent, they bring nothing to God, that God can accept; they deal with God, as those Husbandmen did in the Gospel, instead of paying Rent, they fall upon his Servants and beat them, when God sends and demands his Rent and Glory from them, they seize upon the Inhabitants as their own, and seize upon all as their own: so that if God should not have a portion from his people, that do from day to day bring in his Rent of Glory, he should loose all his glory in this visible world; and therefore it is that the Saints they have made this as an Ar-

Argument, when they have been in low conditions, when they have pleaded with God for their lives, they can tell God of the glory he shall have thereby: So *Hezekiah*, when he was sick unto death, in *Isa.* 38. v. 18, 19. *For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee*, &c. as much as to say; Oh Lord, if thou takest me away, how wilt thou do for thy Rent of glory in the world? Thou hast Thousands of Thousands of Saints in Heaven, to lift thee up; but there are but a few, a very few, to lift thee up in the world, this visible world; and if thou takest away my life, and I go down to the dust, that dust cannot praise thee, though I shal praise thee among the Saints and Angels; yet I shall not praise thee here in the land of the living; nor shall I lift thee up here in the midst of the enemies, though I shall bring glory to thee another way; yet I shall not bring glory to thee in this world: And therefore Oh Lord, do this for thy servant: remember me for thine own name, and for thine own glory; and so the *Psalmist*, *David* did use the same Argument with God, in *Psal.* 30. when he there was sick and ready to go down to the grave; he pleads with God in the 8. and 9. verf. *What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit*, as much as to say, Oh Lord, what wilt thou not look to thine own glory: What shall become of thy gain, of thy Rent, that should be brought in, here in the land of the living? if I go down to the pit, I cannot lift thee up here in this world; there is a long time indeed even for eternity, when thou shalt be lift up by the Saints in Heaven; but it is but a short time that thou shalt be glorified in the land of the living

ying and thou hadst need spare the life of thy servant, to lift up thy name in the land of the living, *What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the pit?* So that still you see the lives of the Saints are very precious in the eye of God: Oh that you that are the people of God that you would believe this; it is worth the pressing it upon you, that you would fix this truth upon your heart; that your lives are very precious in Gods sight: if you be not perswaded of it: I beseech you consider these particulars.

Some particulars to make us to the Saints that their lives are precious in Gods sight.

First of all consider, What a charge God hath given to all his Creatures concerning the lives of his Saints; do but remember their former charge. He hath given charge to the water, and charge to the fire, and charge to the beasts in the earth, and fishes in the sea; he hath given charge to the earth he hath given a charge to violent men, he hath given a charge to the Devil, to Diseases and Sicknesses; surely doth God take such pains and give such charges? surely the lives of his Saints must needs be precious to him: did a man go up and down in his family, and give charge to every one from the greatest to the least: Take heed you do not meddle with such a Box take heed that none of you touch it: why then certainly 'tis precious, there is som precious thing in it; such a charge hath God given concerning the lives of the Saints, he hath taken pains to go up and down in all his family: even the whole world, Heaven and Earth, is his Family; and he hath spoken to every one of his Creatures, to the highest and to the lowest: Take heed you do nothing against the lives of my servants; the very meanest of all the Creatures in

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the whole family shall not say, but that they were warned; he commands the very stones in the field, as it is in *Iob*, making a League with the stones in the field, not to hurt his servants; doth God take such pains, and give such charges, you must needs conclude that your lives are precious in his sight.

Again Secondly, Consider what a guard God hath set about the lives of his Servants: He hath set a guard of Angels about them: *He shall give his Angels charge over thee, that they shall keep thee in all thy ways*; See what the Apostle saith in the first of the *Hebrews*, he speaks of the great privilege of the Saints in the last verse, *Are they not all Ministring spirits, sent forth to Minister to them?* There is not one of the Angels in Heaven, but hath a charge to guard the lives of his Saints; are they not *all* Ministring Spirits? Why brethren, the best of them have a charge given them: from the highest to the lowest, they have all a charge given them concerning the lives of his Saints: and they are as watchful as may be: what says our Saviour *Christ* in *Mat.* 26. 53. do you think (says he) that man can take my life from me whether I will or no? *I go according as it is written of me.* I go because my father hath decreed it, no man can take my life from me, if I would rescue my self, *I could pray to my father, and he should send a Legion of Angels to rescue me, rather than my life should be taken away from me before my time be come.* And so the like may be said of all the Saints: God would send more then twelve Legions of Angels to rescue the lives of his servants out of every danger, and out of the hand of every enemy, rather

ther then their lives should be taken from them, before it was determined of God: certainly the lives of his servants are precious to him, he hath set such a guard about them: a guard of Angels, that God should be pleased rather to want attendance in Heaven, then his Saints lives on earth, should be in jeopardy: God he will spare them all out of Heaven, for to rescue the lives of his Saints before they shall be cut off, before his time appointed be come.

Yea further in the third place, Consider that the Lord himself takes a special care of the lives of his children; he will not trust the lives of the Saints with the Angels; though the Angels be watchful, and as faithful as can be desired in creatures; yet God himself he will have to do with the lives of his Servants; his eye shall be upon them, and his hand under them; there is never a moment in which God doth not watch over them, and himself take a special care of them; what he says of his Vineyard in *Isa.* 27. 3. may be said of every particular Saint; *I the Lord will keep it, I will water it every moment, least any hurt it, I will keep it night and day*: See here, is a gracious promise; I will keep it, and I will water it, and this shall be every moment, this shall be night and day: there is not a moment in the night, nor a moment in the day, in which God hath not special care of his people, from first to last; from the womb he hath a care of them, and so the *Psalmist* doth confess in *Psalm* 22. speaking of the watchful care of the Lord, of the goodness of the Lord, *Ps.* 22. 9, 10. *Thou art he that took me out of the womb, thou didst make me hope when upon*

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my Mothers breasts, I was cast upon thee from the wombe, thou art my God from my mothers belly: See here, from the very womb, from the very beginning, God begins to take the care of his people; he brings this to strengthen his faith on God for the future, to uphold his soul now in his suffering: 'tis spoken of Christ, surely the Lord he can do it, he hath not left me, he took care of me: when I was in the womb, he began then to take the care of me, he delivered me when I was in such straits, when I was almost dead, strugling to get into this world, the hand of the Lord was helping of me: The hand of the Lord was more to me then all creatures, he helped me: See at the beginning, from first to last, God takes a special care of the lives of his Saints.

Fourthly, It will further appear, this great love of God; this great care of God, will further appear; if we consider what a rate he makes men pay for the lives of his Saints, when they take their lives away by violence? He will make them know they have stolen precious Jewels from him: and he will make them pay dear for it; you know what it cost *Jerusalem*, there was found the blood of the Prophets slain, there was a great deal of blood lay upon them; the blood of *Abel*, and the blood of *Zacharias*; and they shed the blood of the Prophets, and Servants of God, and that blood became their overthrow; the blood of them did throw down the Walls and Temple of the City; the streams of blood did sweep away all the Inhabitants thereof: whensoever the life of a Saint is stolen and taken away, God presently sends Hue and Cry after it, and wheresoever God

hath found the blood of his people, he hath declared his wrath againſt them; he hath proſecuted the Law to the utmoſt againſt them: See what is propheſied of *Babylon*; how doth the Lord deal with her in the 18. of *Revelation*, when God came to make inquiſition after the blood of the Saints, 'tis ſaid, *And in her was found the blood of the Saints*, There God found his ſtolen Jewels, the blood of his Saints: See how God doth proſecute the Law againſt her, in that 18. Chapter you read of moſt fearful judgments that came upon *Babylon*: God ſeizes upon all her Riches, all her Glory, and they were all brought down in a day; ſhe her ſelf was brought to execution, ſhe was caſt down, as a Milſtone, caſt down into the bottom of the Sea, never to ſo riſe again: what was the cauſe of all this wrath and diſpleaſure, and fearful judgements that was to come upon *Babylon*? Why this was given as the reaſon, *In her was found the blood of the Prophets*; So then ſtill you ſee, and I beſeech you beleeve it; there is nothing in all the world more precious to the Lord, then the lives of his Servants.

2. *Uſe.* Well 2ly. If the lives of the Servants of God be ſo precious, how precious are the ſouls of his Servants; the life is more then rayment, ſaith Chriſt; the life is more then all creatures, and the ſoul is more then life: the life of Chriſt in the ſoul it muſt needs be a hundred times more precious, a thouſand times more precious: Oh what a high account hath God of the ſouls of his people? what will not God part with rather then he will looſe the ſouls of his people? he will part with the Jewel of Heaven, the great Jewel of Heaven, to ranſome

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the souls of his people: he was content that his Son should come out of his bosome, rather then he would loose one of the souls of his people; the Son was infinitely dear to the Father, more dear to him then all the world; yea ten thousand worlds, and yet he will part with his son, that he may rescue the souls of his people from destruction: Oh how precious was the soul in the eye of Christ, what did he do? what did he suffer to redeem the precious soul? how far did he come to fetch them? a mighty journey the Lord Christ took from Heaven to Earth, that he might bring back poor souls that were taken captive by the Divel, and rescue them from death and destruction; what great hazard did the Lord Christ run when he was upon Earth? Oh what mighty Armies? what Troops did Jesus Christ break through? Armies of sins, and Armies of Divels, that was in his way, and yet he brake through them all, to rescue the souls of his Servants: when he had broke through those Troops, what depths did he descend into, that he might fetch up the souls of his Servants? He was content to go into the depths of the Sea, the red Sea, the Sea of blood; yea, into the depths of the Sea of his Fathers wrath and indignation, that so he might fetch up the souls of his Servants, the depth of the wrath of God, the depth of the infinite wrath of God, it is a Sea that hath no bottom, a Sea of wrath, that men and Angels should never have found the bottom; they shall be descending lower and lower still, and never find the bottom; and yet the Son of God was content to go to the bottome of wrath, of all the billows of his Fathers

wrath and displeasure, that so he might fetch up the souls of his servants that lay under wrath; they could never have lift up their heads above the billows of the displeasure of the Almighty; if Christ had not fetcht them up, if he had not upon his own back carryed them over: Oh how precious were the souls of his Saints in the eye of God! The life of the Son of God was precious to him, and yet his life was nothing to him in comparison that he might save the souls of his people; if he had a thousand lives, he would have layd them all down. Now I beseech you think of this; you that have a mean account of your souls: O how precious is the soul in the account of the Son of God? how great was the price that Christ paid for thy soul? and why dost thou undervalue thy soul, and art willing to part with this most precious treasure in the world: it cost the life of the Son of God to purchase thy soul, and wouldst thou be content to sell thy soul for a trifle; and yet how many thousands in the world do value a thousand things in the world above their souls? and many they will part with their souls for a lust, for vanity, for nothing, for a bag of earth, for an empty cloud of honour, for a little pleasure? Oh what undervaluing is this of thy poor soul! I beseech you remember the worth of the soul; do but consider how precious it was in the eye of God, you that do slight your precious souls: If you feed your body, you care not if the soul starve: Oh that you would remember, you will make a hard bargain, though you win all the world and loose your own soul; what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? I beseech you for the Lords sake, have more care of

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your souls, let your souls be precious in your eyes; 'tis more worth then all the world, if you loose the things of the world, you may find them again, you may gain them again; if you loose all the friends in the world, you may finde them all in the Son of God. he stands in all relations to his people; nay, if you loose this life it self, yet thou maist finde life in Christ, thou mayst finde thy life again in the Son of God; but if thou looseſt thy soul, thou art lost for ever and thou art undone for ever; and thy soul once lost, cannot be found again: Oh that men would account of their souls to be as precious as Christ accounts of them! do not prefer the body, do not prefer the things of this world before thy soul, and the glorious things that are concerning Eternity: thy soul is more precious then thy life, would'ſt thou not put off thy life for a trifle? and would'ſt thou put off thy soul for a trifle? life is precious, but the soul is more precious:

Thirdly, If life be so precious to God, the life of his Saints; Then this should teach us to prize our lives: I say, It should teach us to prize our lives, to look upon them as precious, to look upon them as the most precious Jewel of nature; for 'tis the will of God that we should so look upon them: remember there is nothing in the world that God takes more care of next to the soul, then he doth of the lives of his Saints; and so there is nothing that God is more careful to preserve, so there is nothing that the Devil is more diligent to seek after then life: next to the soul he seeks the life, the precious life; I say, life 'tis the most precious thing in nature: See what *Solomon* says in that 9. of *Eccles.* v. 4. *For to him that is joyned to all*

3. *Use.*

the living there is hope, for a living dog is better then a dead Lyon. He knew there was nothing more excellent then life; speaking of natural life, there is nothing more excellent then life: *A living dog is better then a dead Lyon*; a living dog, that is, a man in a vile condition: a living dog, a man though he lives and be in a vile condition, in a bad condition in a most desperate condition; looked upon from God as a dead creature, that man because he lives is better then a dead Lion; better then Princes and Potentates of the earth, though they did live never so gloriously: Indeed if you look beyond nature, if you look to that condition that is after life, why then their condition is not precious to the Saints; for their condition is better then the condition of the greatest worldly men in the world; and one that dies in the Lord Christ were he a dog, yet he is better then the greatest Lion on the earth: but in naturall things the wise man would have you to know that life is the greatest treasure in nature; and therefore when is the greatest love is expressed, 'tis expressed by laying down of life: *Here is love indeed, that a man lay down his life:* When Christ did express his greatest love that possibly he could, unto his Saints he expressed it by laying down of his life: *I lay down my life for my sheep*, saith Christ: and *Here is love indeed, here God commendeth his love to us, that whilst we were yet sinners, Christ dyed for us*; Here is the commendation of love, to lay down life, nothing better then life to be given: and therefore you shal find that God hath given it as the greatest outward mercy: he reckons it as the greatest outward mercy in times of distress; God some-

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time hath promiſed to do this to his Servants, that their lives, ſhal be given for a prey: that was promiſed to *Baruck*, Jer. 45. verſ. 4, 5. God tells him, the whole land ſhal be layd waſte, and evil ſhal come upon all fleſh; yet this was the mercy promiſed, the greateſt outward mercy, *He ſhould have his life for a prey*; but *thy life will I give unto thee for a prey*: as the greateſt mercy that God could give him for his faithfulneſs; his life ſhould be given him for a prey: God would reſcue his life from danger, when it ſhould ſeem to be taken away, God would reſcue it as a prey, out of the hand of danger, out of the hand of enemies: he would give *Baruck* the greateſt outward bleſſing that can be beſtowed: and therefore I beſeech you prize your lives: I wil tel you briefly how you ſhould prize your lives.

Rules how to prize our lives.

Firſt, Take heed that you ſpeak nothing againſt your lives: Oh that men and women would remember what a precious thing life is: ſpeak nothing againſt thy life; how common a thing is this in the world? if a man meet with matter of diſcontentment, preſently they caſt ſad thoughts againſt their lives; and oh that God would take me away; and oh that there were an end of my life: that I were in the grave; and ſuch kind of expreſſions: Poor creatures, do you know what you ſay? is life ſo precious? and is it ſuch a precious treaſure? and does God make ſuch an account of it? and do you undervalue it? wil you throw away your lives upon every diſcontentment? wil you part with ſuch a Jewel? Oh the folly and the madneſs of mens hearts; ſuppoſe that God ſhould take you at your word; you ſay, Oh that the

the Lord would take away my life; suppose now, that God should come and say, Oh thou vile creature, have I given thee such a precious Jewel as life is, that thou may'st improve it for precious ends, for glorious ends, that thou may'st gain a portion in my self and son, which should make thee happy for ever? have I trusted thee with such a Jewel as life is? and dost thou upon every discontentment, throw life at thy foot? dost thou come and throw it into my hand, before I call for it? Well, I will take thee at thy word; *this night shall thy life be taken from thee*; if God should be in good earnest, I doubt you would call your words back again. *Elijah*, he spoke in a passionate way, against his life, in the first of *Kings* and v. 19. but when God would have taken him at his word, he went back again: See how he desires God to take away his life, at the fourth verse, and *He requested for himself, that he might die*, and *said it is enough now Oh Lord, take away my life, for I am not better then my fathers*, for a little affliction; he is persecuted and driven into the wilderness; in discontentment he sits down, and speaks words against his life; take away my life, why should I live? why, God he takes him at his word, and *Jezebel* shall take away his life from him; but at the tenth verse, the *Prophet* goes back again, and there 'tis his greatest complaint that he makes; *and they seek to take away my life*; and yet before in his passion, he would needs dye: *Lord take away my life I am no better then my Fathers*: Now 'tis a most grievous sin thus to slight that which God hath set such a high price upon: O what care hath God of life, and what charge hath God given all the Creatures in

Heaven

Heaven and Earth? Oh take not away the lives of my Servants; and God hath set Angels over them to keep their lives? and doſt thou account ſo meanly of thy life? wilt thou put away thy life for a trifle, for every croſs and diſcontentment that thou meeteſt with in this world? what diſhonour is this to God? and what undervaluing of that which God counts ſo highly of?

But Secondly, Take heed that you act nothing againſt your lives, take heed thou doſt not go about to ſhorten thine own life; take heed thou doſt not go about to cut off thine own life; this is a grievous ſin, and high provocation: there is nothing that the Devil ſeeks more then this, and this many times is a very urging temptation, a preſſing temptation: Oh take away thy life. Now I beſeech you remember how precious life is, what a precious Jewel 'tis in the ſight of God; and will you caſt it away for nothing? will you caſt it away to gratifie the Devil at his requeſt?

But Oh I live a miſerable life, ſay ſome, my life is a burden, nothing but croſſes, nothing but troubles in the world; it were a thouſand times better for me to dye then to live.

I ſay, Should'ſt thou rid thy ſelf of thy affliction? or ſhouldſt thou not rather wait till God open a door unto thee? what wilt thou break chains? wilt thou break Gods chains? wilt thou break priſon to be gon, before God hath ſet thee at liberty? Oh know God hath worſe chains: chains of darkneſs.

But ſuppoſe thou liveſt in the greateſt affliction; why wilt thou ſin to rid thy ſelf of affliction? is not the leaſt ſin worſe then the greateſt evil? to

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ſin againſt God, an infinite God? and if the leaſt ſin be worſe then the greateſt evil, ſhouldſt thou ſin to rid thy ſelf of affliction?

Obiect. Ay but, I live to ſin againſt God, that makes my life a burden to me; Oh I bear about me a body of death, and I drag it about with me every day ſo long as I live; it makes me weary of my life, and, I deſire to dye rather then to live:

Well, ſuppoſe it; Suppoſe thou liveſt in ſin, and ſuppoſe by taking away thy life, thou doſt free thy ſelf from ſin: yet ſhould'ſt thou have an eye to the word of God; haſt thou any ſuch rule that God hath preſcribed to free thy ſelf this way? Oh, why doſt thou not look to Chriſt, and fetch it from his righteouſneſs, from his blood, and from his death? ſhould'ſt thou not go thither to be free from ſin? is there not pardoning mercy, and healing grace, and waſhing for all kind of ſpots to the utmoſt? thou talkeſt of freeing thy ſelf from ſin, and thou ſinneſt the greateſt ſin that thou canſt ſin, if thou takeſt away thy life. I tell thee, thou had'ſt better live a thouſand years and ſin all thy time againſt God, then ſin this ſin; and go about to do any thing againſt thy life; why this is the greateſt thou canſt do to God; thou giveſt God the lye: God holds forth grace and mercy in the Goſpel, and thou giveſt him the lye: he tells thee in his word, that he is able to ſave to the utmoſt, and thou giveſt him the lye: and therefore I beſeech you, remember your lives are precious Jewels, remember what account God hath of them, and do not act any thing againſt them; do nothing againſt your lives.

Thirdly, If you would improve life; then gain

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as much of God as possibly you can in the time of life, this is the way to gain by life; labour to gain the knowledge of God, and of his Son; labour to get insight into the Mysteries of the Gospel, the great Mysteries of Christ manifested in the flesh: Oh there is an Infinite depth; 'tis worth the seeking after: Oh the precious Mines of grace in the Gospel; truly you cannot improve life better then this way; seek the knowledge of God and of his Son; seek communion with God, and acquaintance with him; get more grace from him more strength; more spiritual good things, this is a rich improvement of a mans life; and will you not make the best improvement of such a Jewel as life is? you will make the best improvements of your estates, put off any commodity for the best advantage, and will you not put off your lives for the best advantage? I tell you, 'tis a Stock, a precious Stock, that God hath given you to use: Oh why should you let the Stock lye dead by you, and do nothing that may advantage your souls another day?

Consider again: this kind of improvement of life, makes a mans life more glorious; if a man be not thus exercised, and thus lay out life, to seek after God, and to get more acquaintance with him, get more communion with him, more fellowship of the Spirit, more knowledge of Christ, more grace, more assurance of his love; why it will make him scarce a man without this: Oh this makes a mans life, a noble life, an Evangelical life; when as he is exercised in such glorious things as these; but when a man doth spend his life, and doth nothing this way, and does not give more

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of God and Christ, he lives like a beast, more then like a man: a poor low, carnal, senceless drossie life, though he be never so high and excellent in the world, though he be in the greatest outward honour, that man lives a low life, and he will not continue in his honour, but in the conclusion, becomes as the beasts that perish.

Fourthly, If you would prize your lives, labour to act as much as you can for God in the time of life: this is a prizing of life, an improving of life: know that life is given you for action; and when a man is dead, he doth not act for God: Oh therefore remember, that there is something that God hath given every one of you to do in this tearm of life: there is some service, some work in your generation that God expects at your hand, even in this life: and I beseech you take the *wisemans* council that he gives you in the 9. of *Eccl.* v. 10. *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might, for there is no working, no device, nor knowledge, nor wisdome in the grave, whither thou art a going*; Improve your lives, saith he, and what ever you do, do it with all your might; consider what is the work you have to do for God in your generation: what work you have to do for God, and what your hand findeth to do, do it with all your might; do not neglect but do what your hand finds to do, do with all your might: life is very short, the work is long: and life is very short, you need work while you have time, you need work while the day last: the night cometh upon every one of you when there is no time for to work, there is no device, no knowledge nor wisedom in the grave, whither thou art go-

going: Oh labour to be for God every one of you in your places: Oh lay out your selves with all your might, to do something for God; though the service you are to perform in your generation, may be tedious, may be laborious and toilesome to the flesh; yet be willing to lay out your selves for God, lay down strength for God, and lay down life for God; Why consider, there is a long rest that is prepared for the people of God; this is the day time, and here you must work for God; there shall come a time of rest, yea they shall rest in their grave; there is sleeping time enough, and they shall rest in Heaven, and there they shall rest enough, they shall rest for ever and for ever; and therefore be content to do for God, and lay down all your strength for God: Oh there is a resting time, a long resting time that is prepared for you; *I have glorified thee on earth*, saith Christ to his Father, *and now Oh Father glorifie me in Heaven*: labour every one of you in your places, in your callings, to exalt the name of God, to glorifie God on earth: I would not have you glorifie God, that God may glorifie you, that is not the end of your work; but glorifie God, because he will glorifie you: because he hath declared that there is rest for you that are his people, and there is an eternal rest in which he will glorifie you with himself: Oh glorifie him therefore with your lives, with your strength, with your abilities, with your parts, with your riches, with all you have, glorifie God in your lives.

I shall conclude all with one word of Exhortation; doth God rescue the lives of his servants in such a wonderful manner? why, let his servants

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for ever trust him: as great mercies do call for great thankfulnes, so they call for great *faith* in the Lord, expect a great deal of future confidence in him: when he hath declared his name to his people, when he hath once made his goodnes and mercy, and power, and faithfulnes, and truth to pass by before them in some special providence, he expects then that they should trust him in the lowest condition, in the saddest condition; that you should take hold of him, and live upon him, he expects that you should reason upon former experiences; and *remember the years of the right hand of the most high*: remember such and such yeers when the right hand of the most High was declared, when God wrought such works of deliverance, such and such wonderful mercies: the Lord expects that such kind of deliverances should be ingagements to trust in him; to trust in him at all times. Many times we will not beleeve unles we see signes and wonders; and the Lord he is pleased to condescend to our weakness; and Christ he shews us a Miracle, yea he shews many wonderful works, mercies and deliverances that he works for his people: and now God he may wonder at the weakness of our faith, if after all these wonders we shall distrust him: See what the *Psalmist* saith, in *Psalm* 96. 10. *Be still, and know that I am God*: why, in all your afflictions, in all your temptations, in all your crosses: in all sad conditions God would have you to be still and know that he is God; and when ever we have received any special mercy from God, we should urge this upon our own souls; if at any time we are ready to distrust God, and repine at any of the dea-

dealings of God: Oh my soul be still and know that God is *Jehovah*; remember the years of his right hand; remember what he did for such and such of his servants: and for thee in such a condition; how he made his power and mercy, and truth, and faithfulness to pass before thee, and wilt thou again murmur, and repine, and distrust him? Oh my soul be still, and know that he is, God. know that he is *Jehovah*, and that he gives existence to his promises; know that he is as good as his word, know that he is better then his word: when ever any rebellious lust doth rise up in thy heart after we have received mercies (which is a great ingagement, yet still beat it back with this, *know that the Lord is Jehovah*: the Lord hath a mighty Arm, and as he hath done, so he will do, and he will not leave his people: the power and the goodness of the Lord, it should sound in our ears when ever we are in any strait: this is a glorifying of God for mercies received: And Brethren, upon all occasions, *Remember the years of the mercy of the most High*: See what the *Psalmist* saith (with which I will conclude all) *Psal.* 62. 11. *God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God*: God hath spoken, how hath he spoken? in some glorious deliverance he hath spoken, in some great mercy: for God speaks in his providence as well as in his words, and when God speaks in his mercy, he expects that we should hear him; nay, that we should not only hear him, but that we should hear him often; he expects that we should hear; what should we hear! we should hear this, *That power belongeth to God*, * *and mercy belongeth to God*, and loving kind-

* *When ever God worketh any glorious deliverance, this should sound in our ears,* That power belongeth to God.

kindneſs and free grace belong to God; and ſo loving kindneſs it belongs to God: The Attributes of God, that do ſound in every mercy, in every deliverance, and in ſome ſpecial mercies, we ſhould not hear it once but twice: God ſpoke once, and I heard it twice, that is, *often* 'tis an alluſion to an Eccho; a man ſpeaks ſometime that it raiſes an Eccho; and the words will be repeated again, he ſhall hear it round about him, the words ſound again; he ſpeaks once and it ſounds twice, often, ſo there is ſuch a voice in many mercies, many deliverances; and many ſpecial providences, they ſound lovd, as the Eccho of a man doth: The Lord ſpeaks once we ſhould hear twice, that power belongs to God. Well, remember that the Lord expects that thou ſhould'ſt hear it often: and when ever thou art brought into a low condition, remember this, what thou heareſt in thy former low condition, that power belongs to God: and mercy belongs to God: And thus ſhould we truſt the Lord in ſtraites: former mercies are ingagements for the future; and this is part of the glory the Lord expects, this is part of the In-come that he deſires for mercy, for deliverance: poor creatures that have ſeen much in it, they ſhould never forget the loving kindneſs of God, when they are in ſtraits, in great ſtraits, ſtill to make uſe of former experiences, and to remember the years of the right hand of the moſt High. Thus you hear what improvement there ſhould be of our afflictions.

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Third Sermon;

On Dan. III. XXV.

He answered and said, Lo I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

YOu know what Proposition was raised the last day, *viz.* That *God doth often times in a wonderful manner, rescue the lives of his Servants from death and destruction*: You had then the Doctrinal part; I have since that, in another place, made some Application, which I shall finish, God willing, at this time time:

we learned by way of Instruction. First, That the lives of his Servants are precious in Gods sight; All the Income of glory that God hath brought in from this world, it comes in this way from the lives of his Servants: if it were not for them, God should loose all his Rent; and therefore the Psalmist doth plead with God, when his life was brought nigh to the grave: In *Psalm* 30. *Lord*, saith he, *what profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the pit?* as if he should say, Lord thou art like to loose thy Profit, thy Rent; if I go down to the grave I shall not bring thee in that Rent of glory: Though I shall glorifie thee in another way; yet I shall not lift thee up here in this world; I shall not make thy name glorious before the eyes of the sons of men, & in the midst of thy adversaries: therefore Lord look to thine own Profit, saith he: The lives of the Servants of God are very precious to him, and therefore he hath given such charges concerning their lives: He hath laid a charge upon all his creatures: Fire, Water, Wild beasts, upon Fishes of the Sea, upon violent men upon violent Diseases, Sicknesses, upon the Divels themselves; he hath charged them all concerning his Servants; that they are not able to lift up a hand against them: and therefore God hath set such a guard about the lives of his Servants; are they not all Ministring Spirits? so 'tis said of the Angels, Hebrews 2. *Are they not all ministring Spirits sent forth for the good of the Saints?* God will spare all his Angels out of Heaven, rather then the lives of any of his Servants should be lost; yea the Lord he will not trust the Angels themselves, but he takes spetial care of the lives of his Servants. *I the Lord*

do

do keep it; I watch over it every moment; And therefore also you find that men have paid dear for his Jewels, when they have taken away the lives of his Servants; he hath always made Hue and Cry after them, and where ever he hath found the blood of his Servants, he hath made them to pay dear for it. It is said of *Babylon*, That when God made search for blood, *he found the blood of his Prophets there*; and how suddenly was *Babylon* brought down? all *Babylons* goods were confiscated presently, they were seized upon as felons goods, and she was brought down with all violence, and she was cast down as a Millstone, into the bottome of the Sea: Now if life be so precious to God, how precious is the soul to God? Oh, the care that God takes of the souls of his people! Oh the pains that Jesus Christ took to fetch the souls of his people! What a journey did he come? And what a Sea of blood did he pass through? What an Ocean of his Fathers wrath did he dive into? He was content to go to the bottome, when all the billows of his Fathers wrath lay upon him; that so he might fetch up the souls of his people; and therefore if the soul be precious unto God and Christ, it should be precious unto you; *What will it profit a man to gain the whole world, and to lose his soul*: and therefore what ever you do, neglect not those great Matters of Eternity, those matters that concern the soul.

Again, If life be so precious with God, why then you should prize your lives? It is the will of God that you should look upon your life as precious: take heed that you speak not against your lives; It was the *Prophets* failing, he would needs dye in

a passion; *Lord, I am no better then my Fathers*: and take heed that you act nothing against your lives, it is the greatest sin that you can sin: Improve your lives to the utmost, gain as much knowledge of God, and communion with God in the tearm of life, as possibly you may; do as much for God, act as much for God in the tearm of life as possibly you may: This is the way to put out your lives for the best advantage. Though man hath never so much of the world, never so much outward honour, yet if his life be not spent in this, in seeking after God in acting for God, he looseth all his honor at last, & become as the beasts that perish.

In the last place, We should *trust* God for the future, and I shall now press this Use of Exhortation more fully upon Gods people: When ever you have seen God in a way of deliverance, you should trust God for the future; 'tis part of the Rent that God doth expect for mercy, that they that have received mercy, should for ever cleave unto God, and in all conditions put their trust in him. Psal. 62. v. 11, 12. *God hath spoken once, and twice have I heard this*, saith the Psalmist, *that power belongs to God.* he hath spoken once, and I have heard it twice: When God speaks in some remarkable providence, why this is the voice of God, *That power belongs to God, and free grace belongs to God.*

What we should trust God for.

1. Trust God first of all, for all the comforts of life, for whatsoever may make your lives comfortable; and that because that life is more then all the comforts of it; and God that gives the greater, will not deny the lesser; it is our Saviours Argument to his Disciples, in Mat. 6. 25. *Therefore*

fore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor yet for your body, what you shall put on; is not the life more then meat, and the body then raiment? Is not life more then meat? Is not the life of greater value then meat, drink, and cloathing? more then all the comforts of life? it is more in the eye of God, the life of one Saint, is more unto God, then all the creatures in the world. Now where God gives life, he takes care for life, he takes care for the comforts of life: See what provision God did make for the beasts in the old Law, there was a Law given in the 25. of Deut. v. 4. *That they should not muzzle the mouth of the Ox that treadeth out the corn*, and the Apostle does apply it; *Doth God take care for Oxen?* and so doth he not abundantly care for men? and so our Saviour he tells us, the *Lord takes care of the Ravens, and he feeds them*: Does the Lord take care of Ravens, and will he not take care of his Saints? Certainly those that fear the Lord, he will fulfil his Promise, *they shall want nothing*, that is his Promise, *Psal.* 34. 10. They shall want nothing that is good for them: they may want something of that they desire, because we desire, like children, that which may be hurtful to us; but it is not possible that Gods people should want any thing that is good for them: Why God is engaged to maintain the lives of his people, and life is more then all the comforts of life.

Secondly, Trust God for the overcoming of all the evils of this life: 'Tis true, Gods people may meet with a great deal of evil in their way, there is many Tribulations to go through: Now

trust God, I say, for the overcoming of them all; for they come all under the providence of your Father; what ever evil thou feareſt should come upon thee, it comes under the providence of thy Father: Now he hath promiſed to be a Shield and a Buckler to his people, it is part of his Covenant, to be their defence againſt all the evil of life; in *Gen.* 15. v. 1. *Fear not*, there ſaith God to *Abraham*, *For I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding great reward*; Fear not, I am thy Shield, and therefore I am able to defend thee, to protect thee, to deliver thee from all the evil that thou feareſt; though there lay never ſo many evils in thy way, believe that God will and can, notwithſtanding them all, make your lives comfortable.

Thirdly, Let Gods people truſt him for the prolonging of life, for the preſervation of their lives; though there is nothing that meets with more enemies, with more danger, then the life of man: and there is nothing ſo unable to reſiſt the evil that it meets with, as the life of man; 'tis true, 'tis very eaſily taken away, as a vapour ſoon blown away; as a candle it is ſoon blown out with every puff of wind, with the leaſt affliction when God is pleaſed to permit it: You know how ſoon King *Aſa* his life was taken away, how eaſily was his life taken from him, in *Chron.* 16. it is ſaid *He had a diſeaſe in his feet*, and one would have thought it had been far enough from the heart, that he might have lived long enough for all that diſeaſe, and yet it turn'd him into the grave, it threw his life down to the duſt: There is nothing I ſay, more in jeopardy, then the life of Man; and no mans life more in jeopardy then the life of a Chriſtian;

and

and yet believe it, notwithstanding all this, your lives shall be prolonged.

First of all till the determined time be come; They shal not be taken from you the least moment before Gods determined time be come: our Saviour, he was often in Jeopardy of his life; he was often in the hands of his enemies, and yet when he was in the midst of them, they were not able to lay hold on him, and this he gives as the reason, because *his time was not yet come, his hour was not yet come.*

Secondly, Nay believe further, you that are Gods people, Your lives shall not be taken away, till you have done that work that God hath sent you into the world for: So that you need not fear untimely death: I say, your work shall be finished before God cut off the Thred of your lives; 'tis said in *Revel.* 11. see what is spoken there, concerning the *two Witnesses*, vers. 7. *And when they have finished their Testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.* It is possible the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, may make war against the Saints, and overcome them, and kill them; but that shall not be till they have finished their Testimony, till they they have done that work which God put into their hand, and they were sent into the world for to do.

Thirdly, Nay further believe it for your comfort, that you shall not be cut off till you be ripe in grace: Many of the Saints they are apt to fear untimely death: I tell you, You that are in Christ, you may be confident of it, that *you shall not be cut down till you are ripe*; see that Proverbs that is made

made in Job 5 v. 26. *Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season*; 'tis a promise that is made to the righteous, *Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, as a shock of corn that cometh in its season*: The Husbandman brings not in his corn till fully ripe, so more will God take away his people til they be fully ripe; *Every thing is beautiful in its season*; 'tis beautiful when it is fully ripe; God plucks his fruit when they are most beautiful; it may be it is possible Gods people may be cut off young; aye but yet they are fully ripe, it shal not be before they are ripe; *God will either ripen them betimes, or else he will ripen them in the very plucking*: for this, see another Promise that is made, in Isa 65. 20. *There shall be no more thence an Infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall dye an hundred years old; but the sinner being a hundred years old shal be accursed*: There shall not be an Infant in days, there shall not be an old man that hath not filled up his days. *An Infant of days*, that is, one that is a child in grace, while he is young: Well, the time is coming, the time of the Gospel, where there shall not be an Infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: a man fills his days when as he is full of grace, full of the Image of God, when he is full of the fruits of Righteousness, then hath a man fil'd his days; when a man fulfils that which he lives for, then he hath filled his days: Why now God hath made this promise to his people, That *they should all fill their days*, they shall be full of grace, they shall be full of righteousness: So that before God pluck them, they shall be fully ripe. Trust

God

God therefore with your days, and with your lives; be confident that God he will hold the candle of your life light; though there be many blasts, yet God he will hold, he will maintain the candle of his peoples life: Be not you negligent in your work, but let it be a spur to you, make all haste for there are many blasts that seek to blow out the candle of your life; make all haste you can to do your work; but do not distrust, the Lord will hold the candle-light, till his peoples work be done. That is the third particular.

Fourthly, Trust God for spiritual mercies; even outward mercies should strengthen our confidence to trust God for spiritual mercies: I truly brethren, this is the best improvement that you can make of mercies and deliverances, when as you can see so much of God as should draw forth your hearts for ever, in all conditions, to put your trust in God: Now know, that the outward mercies were given for this end: It is one end I say, wherefore God gives mercie, that so he might ingage his people, for the future to trust in him; it would be a great discredit to God, if his people after all experiences, he hath given them, shall not trust in him for the future, and there is nothing that doth provoke God more then this. If *Israel* after all the experiences that God hath given them, after all the wonders they had seen in the Land of *Egypt*, and in the red Sea, and after all this shall distrust God through unbelief, God does look upon it as a great provocation: See what God says in *Psal.* 78. about the 19 20 verses. 'tis said in v. 18. *That they tempted God, yea they spake against God*, in the 19. vers. *They said, can God furnish a Table in the wilderness?*

behold

behold he smote the Rock, and the water gushed out, and the streams overflowed, can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people? Now 'tis said in the next verse, *therefore was the anger of the Lord kindled against them*, therefore was the anger of the Lord kindled, because they had seen his wonders at the red Sea, and his wonders at the Rock, yet they distrusted him; *Can God prepare a Table in the wilderness?* this was a limiting of God, and this their unbelief, it cost them dear: Therefore the Lord sware in his wrath, that they should not enter into his rest.

Object. *But you will say, Whether can any mercies or deliverances that a man hath received, be any help unto him for the future?*

How mercies may be helps to the soul for the future.

Answ. I answer they may; and I will shew you when; When mercies received, or deliverances are helps unto the soul, concerning his confidence and trusting in the Lord for the future.

First of all, when the soul is careful to lay up the experiences of mercy; when a man is careful to remember the goodness of God, a man may receive a thousand mercies, a thousand deliverances, such as he might make experience of, for his own benefit and for the help of others, and yet be never the better: I say, if they be not carefully laid up, if they be not carefully treasured up, a man looseth all the sweetness of them; for there are two things that God doth intend in every mercy. First of all, There is present comfort and refreshment that he presently gives out, and then there is something in the mercy to be laid up for the future; there is something in every mercy that God would have his people lay up, something that

will stand them in stead another day; now when a man does not remember the mercy that the Lord dispenseth to him, though he may take some comfort in them, yet he looseth the greater comfort of them, that which he should lay hold on, is the fruit of experience, or else all the mercy is lost.

Secondly, Mercies become helpful when as the soul can see the love of God in the present mercy: when the soul sees the love of God in every present mercy, this puts life into the mercy: when the soul receives mercy, and doth not eye love in it, that mercy, it proves a dead mercy; or if there be any sence it will not last long, because there was not special love seen in it: Now when the soul can eye the love of God in the mercy, then is the heart affected with the mercy, and then is the sence of the mercy most like to be continued: When a man can look at every mercy, as the off spring of love, he will be careful to nourish the sence, the remembrance of that mercy: one mercy that the soul can see love in, is more dear, more precious, then many mercies: See it in *Hezekiah*, he saw special love of God to him in that mercy, *Isa.* 38. part. v. 17. *But thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.* *Hezekiah* was taken with the mercy, why? because he saw the love of God in the mercy: *Thou in love to my soul hast done it*; and therefore he set a high price upon the mercy. Those fifteen years that God added to his life, were more then all his life before, because he saw a special hand of God here, and he saw the love of God here: and therefore that was a long lived mercy, it was remembred, it continued, it remained in *Hezekiahs* heart so long as *Hezekiah* lived.

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Thirdly, Again Thirdly, present mercies become helpful to the soul for the future, when as the heart is fully convinced of the unchangeableness of the love of God to his people: When he is fully perswaded of this truth, That where God loves he loves to the end, and where he begins in a way of mercy, he goes on in a way of mercy, he goes all along in free grace, saith the *Psalmist*, *All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto his people.* When a soul is once convinced, this will help much to turn mercies into experiences; and therefore that Doctrine which doth teach falling away from grace, that a man may be beloved to day, and cast off to morrow: 'Tis a most uncomfortable Doctrine; and 'tis impossible then that a man should make any experience at all of the mercies that he hath received: If God be changable in his love, if he cast off his people that he hath received in his free grace; why then though a man hath never so much of God to day, and knows never so much, and have never so much of the presence of God in the mercy, he can have no experience; and therefore that which concerns the soul, it is to be grounded in the unchangeableness of Gods love to his people.

Fourthly, Again Fourthly, A man may make use of present mercies to be helpful for the future, if he be careful to keep faith in action, if he be careful to keep faith upon the wings: To act faith in every condition upon the free grace of God, and the mighty Righteousness of Jesus Christ; it is faith that puts a value upon all mercies; and if faith be down, a man cannot see the goodness of God in any mercy that he hath received; if faith be

dead

dead then the sense of the mercy is lost, precious mercies, they become useless, they are as a treasure locked up, that a man cannot come by to make use of; a treasure buried in the earth, that will do a man little good; and therefore it concerns the people of God to keep faith upon the wings; act faith and keep that fresh and lively; and then all mercies and all deliverances that you have received, they will be fresh in your eye; for faith puts a varnish upon the mercy, and though they be old, yet faith will make them present as things new to come.

Fifthly, Mercies become helpful for the future. When the soul is careful to keep up his Communion with God, when a man is careful to walk with God continually, to fix his eye upon God, and to follow God fully in every thing, to follow God whersoever he leads him; so long as God and the mercy is kept together, there will be abundance of lustre and beauty in every mercy; but when the soul is careless in maintaining his Communion with God, it looseth then the sense of all his goodness that formerly he tasted in every mercy, and they become useless; even grace it self cannot comfort a man if God be not nigh, if God by his spirit do not shine upon it; and therefore mercies much less though they be never so great and precious mercies that a man hath received; yet they can afford no present comfort nor be a support to him, nor incouragement to wait upon God for the future: but if so be God and the mercy be kept together, then mercies become useful, and an help to the soul to trust in God for the future.

Sixthly, Mercies are helps for the future, when as the soul is inabled by the Spirit of prayer to urge

God

God with former mercies, and to lay them before the Lord as ingagements to help for the future; there is such an improvement to be made of former mercies: When God doth pour a Spirit of prayer upon his people; and then, and then only do mercies that are past become a help to the soul for the future: you shall see so the Saints have urged this with God, they have pleaded with God, and put him in mind of his former kindness; so you may see in the 51. of *Isaiah* about v. 9. *Awake, awake, put on strength, Oh Arm of the Lord, awake as in the ancient days, &c.* And so in the 22. *Psal.* The *Psalmist* there doth use the right Argument with God, he turns former mercies into Arguments, to ingage God for the future in the 9 & 10. verses, *But thou art he that took me out of the womb, thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mothers breasts, I was cast upon thee from the womb, thou art my God from my mothers belly*: Thou art he that took care of me, when I could not take care of my self, and when the care of creatures could do me no good, without the care of the Lord: and seeing thou hast done this for me, I am still incouraged to wait upon thee, to trust in thee for future mercies. Thus you see when mercies and deliverances may be incouragements for the future; and how the soul may make experiences of them.

Quest. *But you will say further, how should we look upon our mercies so as to make the best improvement of them to strengthen our faith in the Lord, for the future.*

I Answer briefly.

First. Look upon them all, as the first fruits which God hath promised to you; this will migh-

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tily help to strengthen the faith of the soul for the future; look upon all as beginnings of that which God doth intend to do for his people; as a spark of that flame of love that is in the bosome of God towards his people, as drops of the Ocean of love, drops of those Rivers that run at God's right Hand, which he hath reserved for his people. I say, look upon all mercies that you have received as fruits of that which God hath reserved in glory for his people; and this will mightily help to strengthen faith for the future.

How to make the best improvement of mercies, to strengthen our faith in the Lord for the future.

Secondly, Look upon them all as staves that God hath given, staffs to hold in your hands for the present; all mercies, all deliverances, all sights of God, all manifestations of his love, all experiences of his goodness; I say, look upon them as staves and crutches that God hath given into your hand for the present, to lean upon while you are in this your Pilgrimage; do not build upon them, you cannot build upon the best of your experiences, do not lay them as the foundation, but only look upon them as helps in your way, and so use them as helps for the present that God gives you, that you may more cheerfully go on to his self, and to his rest in him, where there is everlasting peace. And therefore here will I premise two things, and give you a Caution how to rest upon former experiences; and so I shall end the Point.

Two things premised, and a Caution how to rest upon former experiences.

1. Know this, that it is possible that the soul may looke the sight of all his experiences, they may be all out of sight; 'tis possible that a man may call them all in question, the soul may be brought into such a sad condition, into such a dark condition, that it may call in question all that ever it hath

hath seen of God, and those very things that he did take as some special Tokens of love, all manifestations given forth of himself, all communications of his presence, of his grace; I say, all these they may be darkened out of sight. Or,

Secondly, Though they may be in sight yet God doth many times bring his people into such conditions as their former experiences cannot reach them; God may come still with further and further tryals, and such tryals, I say, that all a mans former experiences cannot reach them: his tryal and temptations may be above them all: And therefore here take these two Cautions when as you are thus to follow experiences, and to make use of experiences.

First of all, Take heed that you do not make your own experience the first ground of your trust: Make not, I say, any experience that you have had the first ground of your trust, or confidence; I said before, experiences are good helps, good Crutches, but they will make no foundation for the soul to build upon: They are not the first foundation that is to be laid: No, you must learn to trust God when you see him not, you must trust God before your tryals; for that is the most blessed thing. See what our Saviour Christ says concerning *Thomas*, in that 20. of Joh. 29. *Jesus said to him Thomas, because thou hast seen thou hast believed, but blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* The heart is so backward to faith, that it is well if it be by any means at last brought off to believe; and therefore the Lord hath condescended to reveal himself to his people by experiences; but yet our Saviour, he saith, it is more blessed to

believe

beleeve and not to see. *Blessed are they that beleeve and have not seen*: This kind of faith is that which brings most glory to God; to beleeve a man before he try him, 'tis a great trusting of him and so 'tis an honour put upon him; now to beleeve in God before the soul hath tryed him, before he hath had experience, this is an honour, a great honour that is done to God; and this is the faith that wil hold out, this wil last; this kinde of faith it will uphold the soul in the greatest straits, in the lowest condition, when sense fails and when experiences are gone out of sight, why then this kinde of Faith wil hold up the soul; when the soul can trust the Lord though he had not tryed him, trust him, though God had not given experience; trust him first of all because of his word, because of the word of his grace, that is given forth to the soul, as a foundation to build upon, this is an honour indeed to God.

Secondly, Be careful throughout all your whole course of life, that you rely more upon the word of the Lord, then upon your experiences; throughout the whole course of your life, you will find this more beneficial to rely upon the word of the Lord; and here I beseech you to remember, that this life is the life of Faith, it is the life of Faith and not the life of sense; in Heaven the Saints shall live by sence, they shall have no need of Faith, the life of Faith is not proper for them; but the life of Faith is proper to Gods people on earth, to beleeve and not see: *Faith is the evidence of things not seen*; it is taken up with things not seen: I say, this life it should be a life of Faith unto the Saints, it is not a life of sence;

Caution 3.

And consider moreover if God do give any spiritual sence, or if he do give any experiences of his love, it is given for this end, that so he might help the Faith of his people, that he might help their Faith, and strengthen their Faith, that so he might encourage them for the future to trust in him; to trust in him when they see him not, when all is dark and sad, when God seems to be out of sight; I say, God gives incouragements for this end, that so he might incourage them to believe; and therefore it is that oftentimes he trains up his people in this way; he will strike the Crutches out of their hands, he will put them to it, they shall walk alone by Faith; that all the sence of Gods dealings with them shall be out of sight, they shall have nothing to rely upon; God will put them to it, to rely upon him alone, upon a naked word of promise, upon the word of grace, to rely upon him though they have nothing in the world to rely upon,

2. Consider, though it be great mercy that the Lord is pleased to condescend so far to the Creature to give spiritual sence, and many times experiences, by which he will seal up his word and his grace to them, yet it is a greater mercy that God hath given a word of promise to rely upon, that is the greatest mercy in the world; a surer foundation of hope, and that which will stand a poor creature in stead when it is in the dark, when all the sence will be in the dark, and experiences out of sight; but then the word of the Lord will endure for ever; and so then we have a word of grace to rely upon, a word of promise; this is the greatest mercy that God can

shew to poor Creatures: My Brethren, if it were not for this, it were not possible that the soul should be at any certainty; though God had given never so many experiences of his love, though the soul had seen, and though it had felt, and tasted of love, and though it had layen in the bosome of Jesus Christ, and been refresht with his love; yet if the Lord had not given a word of grace to rely upon, a word of promise to rely upon; It would be impossible but that at some time or other they would call all in question, for 'tis not possible that otherwise the soul should be supported in dark conditions, for why? when the soul begins to look towards God, why it is fill'd with the sense of his own vileness, with the sence of his own unworthiness: Oh that is one of the greatest discoveries that the Lord makes: shew the soul how vile it is in it self: and therefore I say, the soul is ready to question all that God hath done for it, though it hath seen God walk in a way of love to him; yet still, Oh 'tis too good for me, too good for such a vile Creature as I am!

Again, The desire of the soul is carryed mightily after God, when God comes once to set his face towards Heaven, it is fill'd with vast desires to God, that it can never have enough, never be satisfied; and though God do come and manifest himselfe by gracious Experiences, yet still it desires more of God: It is apt to question, Have I any thing of God or no? Have I seen God or no? it is very solicitous when it is once set towards Heaven, God makes it very solicitous concerning the great matters of Eternity: 'tis

fill'd with the weighty thing of Eternity, and the weighty busines of Eternity; so though God hath come and hath spoke, and the soul hath seen God, and experiences of God; yet because it apprehends such great weighty matters concerning the soul for eternity; all experiences are called in question of Gods love and his favour to him: A man is so careful in this case, that he will scarce beleeve himself: nay, though he have seen Christ, and though he have felt him, and seen his goings, still he will hardly beleeve himself, whether he hath seen him or no: you know *Mary Magdalen*, she was very solicitous, she stood weeping; she saw him and she would not beleeve her own sence; and so 'tis with a poor Child of God, Oh 'tis so solicitous that though it have seen Christ, and experiences of his goodnesse, and his favour and love; yet it will scarcely beleeve his own sence, and he is apt to call all in question whether he hath seen the Lord or no: So that still, I say, after all experiences and the manifestations of love, the soul would call all in question many, and many a time, if it had not a word of Grace to trust to; and therefore the Saints are more beholden to the Lord for his Word of Grace to them then for all experiences: And remember this, That though God hath done never so much for you, and you have seen his goings in your hearts; yet doe not you make your experience the first Ground of your trust, and do not trust to your experiences so; but look to the Promises as the

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Promises, as the only Foundation that will bear up your heart for ever, through all dark conditions; And so for Experiences, look upon them as Crutches to lead you to the word of his Grace; but they are not to be rested in.

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Fourth Sermon,

On Dan. III. XXV.

He answered and said. Lo I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

I Have spoken out of these words. We have finished one Proposition: Namely, *That God doth oftentimes in a wonderful manner rescue the lives of his servants from death and destruction.* I prest you the last day, that Christians should therefore trust in God; such as have see

seen his goings, should trust him for the future, upon former experiences; when God speaks once in a remarkable providence, he expects we should hear twice, again and again; in every low condition we should hear, *That power belongs to God.* Trust him for the comforts of life, and trust him for the preventing the evil of life; trust him for the upholding of you in life, till his time be come, and your work be filled; only be not you negligent, make haste in your work; work the works of God while the day lasts: but yet you may be confident the Lord he will not suffer the Candle to be blown out till your work be filled: *The righteous shall come to his grave as a shock of Corn that cometh in, in his season*; I shewed how far we may make use of former mercies for the future to become great helps of Faith; when the soul is careful to lay up the remembrance of them, when the soul can eye the love of God, special love; when the soul is once convinced of that truth, of the unchangeableness of the love of God; when the soul keeps up the wing of Faith, and holds up its communion with God, can go and lay before God former mercies, and use them as Arguments to plead with God for the future; as Gods people have done; then do mercies become helpful for the future.

But how far should we trust Experience? Why look upon them as Earnests of that which God doth intend to give, and look upon them as Crutches, as helps in the way; so though all the experiences of God may be out of sight, for God may bring his people into some condition that may be above Experience, Experience cannot

teach them: And therefore do not make your own Experience the first ground of your trust; but trust first in the Lord, and the word of his grace, trust them more then all your experiences; the life of a Christian, 'tis the life of Faith, and not of sence; the life of sence is in Heaven, but the life of Faith is most proper here, *Blessed are they that believe, and have not seen:* and if God do give Experience, and manifest his love and goodness to thee, it is for this end that he might strengthen Faith; he will learn his children to go alone: and therefore God many times hath struck the Crutches out of their hands, and all sights of God shall be gone, and God will make them to trust in his naked word: Great use may be made of Experience; but yet I say, lay the word of the Lord as your foundation, and trust that, for that will hold in all conditions, in the greatest darkness, when Experience may be out of sight, and you can see nothing.

We proceed.

He answered and said: Lo, I see four men loose, &c. Who is it here that bears witness of this Miracle of deliverance? 'Tis *Nebuchadnezzar* the King: it was one that was a proud insolent Monarch, one that scorned God, and defied the most High, in the 15. verse of this 3. Chap. that commanded the people to fall down and worship his Image, that he had set up; and in the latter end, *Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hand?* a persecutor of the Saints, one that was filled with wrath against them: *The King was exceeding wroth, and commanded the Furnace to be heated seven times hotter then ordinary:* Yet here *Nebu-*

Nebu-

Nebuchadnezzar himself is forced to bear witness of the goodness of God to his people; He confesses it before all men: *Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire, and lo I see four men loose walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt*: There is a question propounded by Interpreters, whether *Nebuchadnezzar* was truely converted or no? It seems there is much does make for his conversion.

A Question propounded by Interpreters.

First of all; Here was a strong work of conviction that fell upon him, he was convinced of his sin, he was convinced of the glorious Majesty of God, to shine in this Miracle: His conviction makes him cry out before all the world, before all that were about him.

2. There is Secondly, A confession of his Error, and an acknowledgment of his sin: Now he knows there is no God, but the true God: There was also in the

3. Third place A rejoycing in his own disappointment, he rejoyced in that the Lord had prevented him in the evil that he intended, that he was not able to bring it to pass, his mischievous device against the Saints: as you may see in vers 28 *Then Nebuchadnezzar spake and said, blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who hath sent his Angell, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, &c.* There is a rejoycing here that they were delivered, and that he was disappointed, that he did not succeed according to his will: Now this seems to be a great measure of self-denial: What did not *Nebuchadnezzar* do as much in this as *David* did when he was disappointed? in the first book of *Samuel* 25. when *David* had an intention to cut off *Nabal*: *Abigal* she comes to

persuade

perswade him, and in the 32 v. *David said to Abigail, blessed be the Lord God of Israel which sent thee this day to me.* *Nebuchadnezzar* did seem to do as much as *David* did here; he blesseth God for his own disappointment.

Fourthly, this seems to make for him, that he did rejoyce in the goodnesse of God to his people, he does rejoyce in their grace; as you may see in the 28. verse, *Blessed be the God of Shadrach, who sendeth his Angels and deliverreth his servants that trust in him*: He seems to rejoyce here in their grace, in that constancy of theirs that they did not yeild to his command, and serve no God but their own God; and he rejoiceth in the deliverance of the Saints: *Blessed be the Lord that deliverth his servants*; yea further, he seems to give the glory to God: He does eye God in the deliverance: he takes notice of it as from God, and blesseth the Lord: *Blessed be the Lord that sendeth his Angels, and deliverith his servants*: Nay further, he takes care of true Religion, and of Gods Name to be exalted; he makes Decrees, and sends it to all people. and *whosoever does ill any thing against God, shall be cut in pieces*, and their houses thrown down and made a jakes: Thus you see what a great way he went, and what a great deal *Nebuchadnezzar* did seemingly for God upon this his conviction; and yet it may be it was but a conviction; and that there was not a thorow work of grace at this time wrought upon his heart. Many works he did, but yet they seem to be effects of a temporary faith. *Nebuchadnezzar* notwithstanding all this, he fell back again to his old way of supposition; for in the fourth Chapter, you shall

read

read there of his Superstitious ways: He dreams a Dream, and he sends for the Sorcerers to call his dream, and he would have cut them off because they could not tell him his dream, and reveal it to him, which belongs to God to reveal secrets: So that though great conviction, I say, post upon him, which did rise from the present sight of the Miracle that was wrought, yet *Nabuchadnezzer* at that time, he was not truly brought home to God: So then we may observe this Proposition of Doctrine,

The second Proposition of Doctrine

That it is not in the power of the greatest Miracles to convert a soul to God, unless the Spirit of Jesus Christ step in: I say, it is not in the power of the greatest Miracle, to convert a Soul to God.

Neither Miracles of Judgment, nor Miracles of Mercy will do it: *Pharaoh*, King of the *Egyptians*, he saw as many Miracles of judgment, as one would have thought, would have broken the most stonieſt heart, and made the most obstinat wretch to submit to God; and yet notwithstanding *Pharaoh* heart was not softened, but hardned. And all those Miraculous works of Judgment, they made him harder: The people of *Israel*, they saw Miracles both of judgment and mercy, and yet for the most part, they were secure, hard hearted, unbelieving people, they were a burden to God, and a provocation to his Spirit: All the time they were in the Wilderness, what Miracles of judgment did they see? God smote some of them with fire from Heaven, and consumed them: God smote *Miriam* with Leproſte, in the 12. of *Numbers*, for her murmuring:

Instances to clear it.

And

And the Lord consumed *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, in *Numbers* 16. they were consumed, and yet the people rebelled against God; he sent fiery Serpents amongst them, in the 21. of *Numbers*; another Miracle of judgment, and yet notwithstanding for all that, *they rebelled against the Lord*; They saw Miracles of Mercy also; What wondrous works did God do for them in the Land of *Ægypt*? What wonders at the red Sea, in dividing the waters, and made a path of life and death to go through? life to the *Israelites*, and death to the *Ægyptians*: they saw his wonders in the Wilderness; *God led them in the day time by a pillar of light, and in the night time by a pillar of fire*; He rained Manna from Heaven, they eat Angels food, he gave them water out of the Rock, *Moses smote the Rock, and the water came out*: *He rained feathered fowl into their Camp, that they all eat and were full*: And many other Miracles of Mercy they saw: many Mercies which are expressed in the 78. *Psalm*, but notwithstanding for all this, you may see what this people was, at the 8. verse of the 78. *Psalm*, *A stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that sets not their hearts aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God*: This is the description that is given of their fore-Fathers, *They were a stubborn generation, rebellious a generation, that set not their hearts aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God*.

Secondly, As we have instances to prove it, so we have the word of Christ to prove it, to make it evident that it is not in the greatest Miracles of the world to convert a soul to God: See what our Saviour saith, in that 16. of *Luke*, and the 31.

Tis

'Tis the word of *Abraham* in the Parable; *he said unto them, if you hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will you be perswaded, though one rose from the dead*: The rich man in Hell, he desires that one may be sent from the dead to give them warning; why *Abraham* tells them they have *Moses* and the *Prophets*, *let them hear them, and if they hear not Moses & the Prophets, neither will they be perswaded though one rose from the dead*. The greatest Miracle in the world what ever, it will not turn the heart to God, it will not make them to believe in his name; though one should come from the dead thou God should send an Angel, a Saint from Heaven, that should be as a flying Angel, to fly up and down in the world, to speak the voice and tongue of an Angel, though he should declare this to all the world, that the glory of Heaven is unspeakable, incomprehensible eternal, the joy is everlasting, they shall never be able to declare it; though he should declare one hours injoyment of the presence of God and the Lamb, it is more worth than ten thousand injoyments of all the pleasures of the world; though he should declare it, that there is but one way to Heaven, there is but one door o enter in at, and that's only by *Jesus Christ* and his Righteousness, and should tel you of ten thousands that shal not come there, that sought to enter in their own way, and by their own works, and their own righteousness, and they are all shut out; though he should further declare, that God hath now set Heaven doors wide open, and that he is willing that poor sinners, the worst of sinners, should come to him by his Son, and they shall be accepted, and all their former

our iniquities shall be no block, no rub in the way, he will embrace them as freely as if they had never sinned against him; I say, if such a thing should be, it would be a Miracle of Mercy; but yet for all this, it would not perswade the heart of one sinner to submit to God. This could not overcome the heart of man to *Jesus Christ*. And again, on the other side, if one should come from the dead, God should send one from the pit of destruction to declare, to bear witness of the unspeakable Torments that are there, and should declare, that way is broad, and many walk in the way to destruction, and that unbelief it is the readiest way: Though he should declare that every man and woman living, that seek not after *Jesus Christ*, and hath not an interest in him, are like, sooner or later, to come into the same Lake of condemnation: It would be a terrible Miracle of judgment; but yet all this would not work upon the heart of one sinner: no, our Saviour says to such men and women that sit under the Gospel, and hear what I speak from day to day, and thereby are not wonted to submit to God: *why, neither would they believe though one should come from the dead.*

Thirdly, The Point may be further cleered, by our own Experiences. I say, by experiences of our own days; are there not many poor Creatures that have seen Miracles of Mercy, that have seen God, many times in wonderful way of deliverance towards them? at such a time they were in danger, eminent danger, at such a time they were nigh to death, and what great promises, and what great purposes came into their

hearts

hearts and mouths: and yet notwithstanding all that God hath done for them, they have turned again to folly; nay, sometime they have seen and tasted as it were of the power of the world to come, that God hath convinced them many times of the excellency of the way, and the necessity of walking with him, and the happy condition of the Saints, & they it may be, have had some taste, some drops to cool their tongues; and though they have had that Miracle of Mercy, yet notwithstanding their hearts have gone back again, and they have not bin converted and perswaded to come to Christ, after a hearty draught of his love and goodness, which might abundantly satisfie them: others that have seen even Miracles of judgment; God many many times hath wrought strong conviction in their conscience, they have been as it were for the present, hang over the flames of Hell, and great thoughts have been stirred into their spirits; convincing thoughts of the necessity of seeking after faith, they have seen as it were the mighty consequence of the soul, the mighty consequence of the things of Eternity, and yet have worn out all time that have been stirred upon conscience, and soon returned to their former ways of folly, to folly & desperate madness, others taken up in vanity, taken up in the world, others taken up in their own righteousness, and think themselves whole, and need no Physician; notwithstanding all these Miracles of judgment, how many are there that have seen them, and have felt them, and have not been brought home savingly by them?

But you will say, how come this to pass? what can-

cannot miracles of works bring home a soul to God? what then? what miracles?

I answer first of all, God would have it so that

Reason 1. he might put a great glory upon his word, he will have it known what the word of the Lord is, he will make known the power and efficacy of it; his word is more dear to him then his work, more then all his works of Creation, of Providence, or Miracles; though all perish, yet the word of the Lord that endures, that abides; God will put a great deal of glory upon his word; and therefore he hath chosen his word rather then Miracles; though men think, Oh Miracles are glorious, and surely, if God shew miracles that will convert, that will bring home the soul to God; but Gods thoughts are not our thoughts, his waies are not our waies, he knows that miracles cannot do it; therefore he hath chosen his word; he will make that glorious in the Conversion of sinners; for the most part God works by his word; it is true, the word it self neither cannot do it, the word without the Spirit is a dead letter; but God is pleased to send his spirit along with his word; when hee intends this work the spirit of the Lord shall come with some word from heaven that shall be effectual to turn the heart of a sinner, when Miracles of judgment or mercy cannot do it; it seems a weak thing to men, but the word of the Lord is mighty and powerful: When God is intended to catch any soul to bring it home, commonly this is his Net, he takes his word and throws that over them, and that shall catch them. When he is intended to beat down strong holds, mighty Towers of lusts, sinful imaginations that do exalt themselves

against

against Himself and his Son, and his Gospel; why, God is pleased to use his word as the battery which will do this great and glorious work.

Secondly, It comes to pass from the desperate hardness that is in mans heart; that aversness that is in the soul naturally to God: it is the hardest matter in the world to bring God and the soul together: Oh what striving is there in the gracious heart, before it is brought to God? it flies off from God; and the soul is forced to put Arguments upon himself, it may be again and again; *Why, art thou cast down Oh my soul, why art thou disquieted? why, trust in God; Why trust in God.* He repeats it again, and again, and all too little to trust in God, and to have confidence in God; but there is much more aversness in a natural mans heart to God; there is an infinite distance, there is a contrariety; and 'tis a hard matter to bring off a soul to close with God, to submit to him: the greatest Miracle in the world cannot do it: why, when there is much peace in Gods heart, there is war in the sinners heart; yea, when there is peace in Gods mouth too, there is war in the sinners mouth: when God doth call upon them, come and behold the face of my Son, and behold the face of my righteousness, I give thee leave to look to either me, so thou look to me through my Son: yet still he will have his heart down lower, and he will look to God through his own glorious merit, that of a creature; or else run away from God, hide himself in his own shame and confusion, and dare not come to God. And truly 'tis a very hard thing to overcome the heart in this case, to trust God, to rely upon him; the heart is full'd with

Reason 4.

slavery, and 'tis a very hard matter to overcome that slavery that is in the heart: I tell you, Miracles will not do it; though it should see never so many Miracles when it is in that condition; Miracles would not overcome the heart to trust in God to beleeve in God: Miracles, they declare the power of God and the glory of God, hold forth the beams of his Majesty; ay but there must be a declaration of the love of God, and the mercy of God in Christ; there must be a discovery of this to the soul, before he can come in and submit to God, and trust in him, before the slavery can be overcome that is in the heart. I tell you, you must have a word, a sure word, to go upon; for the soul dare not go to God, he looking upon himself as stubble, and upon God as a consuming fire; and still he keeps off from God: and therefore nothing but the word of the Lord can perswade the heare to come in, and to trust, and rely upon God.

Application of the Point.

Now let us make some Application: Is it so, that the greatest Miracle cannot convert a soul to God: Why then

Use 1. First of all, take notice what a Miracle of iniquity, of sin, is in every mans heart! a strange thing that the heart of a man should be so hardned against God and his own good; who would think it, that there should be so much stoutness in such a peeny thing as the heart of man? so small a piece of flesh, to be so stout, and so hard against God? that no sword should be able to pierce it; it should not be only Musquet proof, but Cannon proof; stand out not only against afflictions, lesser judgments, but stands out against great judgments,

ments; many times against miraculous judgments: why here is a strange stoutness, and hardness in every mans heart: Oh what a dead sleep is every man by nature cast into! you will say that man is in a dead sleep, that though he be shot at, it cannot wake him, that he should sleep secure when the house is on fire about his ears; truly, this is the condition of every man by nature, though God do lay Cannon shot against him, and though God set on fire the world about his ears, yet still he sleeps: what a strange condition is the state of nature? Let us all take notice of it, and let us all bewail it in the presence of God, seeing how woful it is, and what we are like.

Use 2. Secondly, If Miracles cannot convert a soul, then what a Miracle is it that any soul is converted? truly we may stand and wonder that any soul should be brought home to God; how many Miracles is in this work of conversion? to convert a soul to God; 'tis a greater Miracle then to open the eyes of the blind, to give strength to lame, to give life to the dead; a greater Miracle then to turn darkness into light, a greater Miracle then to beat down strong Cities with seven Rams horns, 'tis a greater Miracle then to make the world; *he spake, and it was done.* it was made, he spake his word, and the world was created: but God speaks again, and again, once and twice, and often, before the new creature is formed, before faith is created in the heart of man: and truly Brethren, you need not wonder that so few are brought home to God; that's not the Miracle: but stand and wonder that any should be brought home to God; there are many Miracles

Many Miracles in the conversion of a soul to God.

First Miracle of wisdom.

in the conversion of the soul to God; I beseech you take notice of them: there is a Miracle of of *wisdome*; there is a Miracle of wisdom, I say, in the conversion of a soul, that God should find out a way to reconcile himself to a sinner, and then reconcile the sinner to himself; here is infinite wisdom to finde out a way to reconcile himself to the sinner, to find out a way to satisfie both justice and mercy, that they should meet each other and kiss each other, and both be satisfied; that justice should say, I have enough, and Mercy should say, I am well pleased, and both be glorified in Christ: Brethren, here is a way that men and Angels could never have found out, here is a Miracle of wisdome to reconcile the sinner to God; also here is abundance of the wisdom of God, that God should finde out a way to make a rebellious sinner, come in and submit when he had stood out long, and stood many batteries, that God had layd against him; that the Lord should bring him in by a word of his grace; that God should come and catch a poor soul, and take him before the soul be aware: here is abundance of holy wisdom, truly none could do this, but only God.

Secondly, There is a Miracle of Power.

And as there is a Miracle of wisdom, so there is a Miracle of power in every souls conversion: Oh wonderful power hath God put forth to overcome the creature, and to overcome himself: To overcome the creature, to make a stubborn, stout hearted sinner relent, to shake the Oaks of *Basban*, and make the Cedars of *Lebanon* to stoop: Yet truly this is the work of God, he put abundance of power into a word of his;

and

and when an obſtinate ſinner hath ſtood out both the allurements of Mercy, and hath out ſtood all the batteries of Judgment that God hath laid againſt him, God hath ſent out many Armies of judgments, to bring him in, and they have returned back again, and have not done their work; and that yet the Lord at laſt, ſhould be pleaſed to arme a word of his, a poor naked word of his with ſo much power, to give ſuch authority, and to give ſuch commiſſion, as to go and bring in the ſtout hearted ſinner, and make him fall down at the footſtole of Jeſus Chriſt; here is a Miracle of *power*; and then that God ſhould overcome all his wrath, and all his fury and indignation, and ſay, it is not in me, I give thee leave to draw nigh to me, in my Son, fury is not in me; that God ſhould overcome himſelf to ſtoop to the creature that the Majeſty of Heaven ſhould firſt ſtoop to the creature, that the Prince ſhould come and beſeech the Rebel to accept of mercy offer the firſt tearms of peace, and not looking to the infinite diſtance that is between him and the creature; but lay that aſide, and beſeech a poor creature to accept of mercy; here is a Miracle of *power*.

And then there is a Miracle of *goodneſs*, a Miracle of *mercy* in every ſouls converſion; a Miracle of mercy, that God ſhould pardon the ſin of his people from Eternity; Oh the Miracles of mercy, writes the pardon, gives the pardon into the Sons hand; that he ſhould work it over by Covenant, and make all ſure for his people in Chriſt, even from Eternity, even to give Chriſt a pardon for his peoples ſins, many thouſand years before the ſins are committed; I do not

ſay

say the pardon is given out to them, before they are brought in to submit to Christ, but it is given out into the hand of Christ; that if they come and submit to Christ, 'tis in his hand to give it out. 'tis already written and Sealed; here is a Miracle of *Mercy*.

Again, that the Lord should so freely, and so fully blot out transgressions; that he should make the sins committed to be as if they had not been committed; there shall no more remain of them as if they had never been acted; to bury them, to cast them behind his behind his back, to throw them into the depth of the Sea, to carry them into the wilderness, into a land of forgetfulness, that when they are sought for, they shall not be found, they shall be as if they had never been; what a Miracle of *mercy* is this? that God should bear no old grudge to a poor sinner, a Rebel, one that have stood out against him, and yet that God should retain no grudge in his heart, but receive a poor soul into his Bosom, as if he had never been defiled; to receive him into his own bowels, into intimate communion and acquaintance with himself in love, as if he had never bin a Rebel; to bear no old grudge, here's wonderful rich mercy!

Again, for God to account the soul righteous, to look upon him as righteous, when he is unrighteous; to look upon him as righteous in Christ, when he is full of spots and polutions, and deformity in himself; at that very time to look upon him in Christ, and behold him as righteous, as if he had no spot, no defilement in him: Brethren, all these are Miracles of mercy.

Again, that God should pour out his spirit upon

on a poor lump of flesh; that his spirit should work upon a poor creature, and take a poor creature into union with himself, and communion with himself; that he should be working in the heart, and cleanse a poor creature from pollution, both of flesh and spirit; all these are Miracles: Miracles of *Wisdom*: Miracles of *Power*: and Miracles of *Mercy*, that doth shine in the bringing home of a soul to God: And therefore to conclude all; in the last place,

Let us bless God for his Word, and look more to the word of God, then to Miracles; seeing what power God hath put into his word, and how he is pleased to accompany his word with his spirit, and do great things; and now why should we look to Miracles? and why should we stand upon miracles? truly, if you will not beleeve the Word of the Lord without Miracles; neither would you beleeve though God should work Miracles; why there is more power in the word to perswade the heart, that it is indeed the word of God, and so to overcome the soul to beleeve, to rest on it, then there is in all Miracles that can be shewed; and therefore in this case, if any look for a Miracle, they may hear Christ say, no Miracle shall be given to such a generation: *He that beleeves not the word, he will not beleeve, though one rose from the dead*: *Nebuchadnezzar*, he saw three men that had a resurrection from the dead, they were dead in all their accounts, they thought that they had been all consumed; they have an unexpected life, they are all loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and yet I say, *Nebuchadnezzars* heart was not firmly wrought upon by *Use* 3.

by this Miracle; but be returned again to his own folly: And therefore, Oh praise the Lord for his word, bless the Lord for his word; if it had not been for the word of his grace, how should a poor creature have been brought in, and what should poor creatures have relyed upon? what foundation to build upon? what can give boldness and confidence to a poor soul to draw nigh to God? truly it could not be, it is impossible that the heart should be overcome, to submit to God, without the word of his grace: Oh bless the Lord for his Word: we are more beholden to the Lord for his Word, then for all Miracles that possibly can be shewed.

THE

THE

Fifth Sermon,

On Dan. III. XXV.

He answered and said, Lo I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

THere is witness given to a Miraculous deliverance, that God wrought for his three Servants, who through their faith, overcame the violence of the fire: *Nebuchadnezzar* makes a large confession here. I propounded this question the last time; Whether *Nebuchadnezzar* was truly brought

brought home to God or no; he did a great deal, he spake a great deal; there was a great work of conviction past upon his spirit, he doth acknowledge his Error, and sin, he doth rejoyce in his own disappointment, that God did not suffer him to have his will; he doth rejoyce in the goodness of God that was shewed to his Servants; he rejoyces in their constancy, that they did not obey the Kings command, worship his Gods: he did rejoyce in their deliverances; he doth acknowledge that it was God that delivered them; he takes care of the worship of God, to promote it; he makes a penal Statute That *whosoever did profane the name of God, should be cut in pieces*; and yet notwithstanding for all this, we concluded probably, That *Nebuchadnezzar* was not converted; for in the next Chapter, he returned to his old way of sin, of superstition; he dreams a dream, and he sends for the Sorcerers, to tell him his dream, which belongs to God to reveal secrets, as *Daniel* told him: So then we observed, that *It is not in the power of the greatest Miracle, to convert a soul to God.* *Nebuchadnezzar* saw great Miracles, Miracles of mercy, and Miracles of judgment: We told you *Pharaoh* saw Miracles, and *Israel* saw Miracles in *Ægypt*, and at the red Sea, in the Wilderness; Miracles of mercy, and Miracles of judgment; sometimes their plagues were wonderfull, flung with fiery Serpents; and Miracles of mercy, God he fed them with *Manna* and water out of the Rock; and notwithstanding for all this, they were a stubborn Generation, and dwelt in unbelief: our Saviour tells us in that Parable, in the 16. of *Luke*, but they are the words

Observes.

of

of *Abraham*, *They have Moſes and the Prophets, and if they will not hear them and believe, neither would they believe though one roſe from the dead*: Though God ſhould ſhew the greateſt Miracle, yet that would not convince them, that would not bring off their hearts to believe in the Son of God: 'tis the hardeſt matter in the world to bring God and the heart together, they are at ſuch a great diſtance, Infinite diſtance; and the heart of the creature is filled with ſuch ſlavery, and lay under bondage, that it dares not go to God, when God calls to behold his face in his Son, but run to the buſh, as *Adam* did; but though Miracles will not do it; it hath a word of grace, a ſure word of grace, to draw nigh to God; and therefore we ſhould look upon that Miracle of iniquity that is in the heart of all the ſons of *Adam*; it is a ſtrange thing that the heart of man ſhould out-ſtand ſo many blows, that ſo ſmall a piece of fleſh as the heart of man is, ſhould withſtand thoſe great batteries that God many times is pleaſed to make by judgments, wonderful judgments, when he declares his wrath from Heaven to ſinners; and conſider what a Miracle of mercy it is, that any ſoul ſhould be converted, and brought home to God, ſeeing Converſion is ſo hard a thing, and Miracles will not do it? What a Miracle it is for a ſoul to be brought home to God! I ſhew how many Miracles were in this work: Miracles of *wiſdom*; Miracles of *power*: Miracles of *mercy*: Oh we ſhould bleſs the Lord that hath given us his word: we ſhould prefer the word before Miracles; we ſhould not look to Miracles, but we ſhould look to the word of the Lord; God hath made that to

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bring home souls; and therefore we are infinitely beholden to the Lord for the word of his grace, that we have the word of his grace to trust in. We proceed,

Consider who it is that bare witness to the Miracle: 'Tis *Nebuchadnezzar* that was an enemy to the Saints, a persecutor, a scorner, a contemner of God. *Who is that God that shall deliver out of my hand?* and yet the Lord makes him to bear witness of that good he did his people: We shall observe then this: *Proposition*:

Observ. 3. *God many times makes his peoples Enemies to acknowledge and confess that the Lord is with them, and that he hath dealt graciously with them*: God makes very enemies to confess oftentimes, that he deals wonderfully, and graciously with his people: The Church was confident of this in her affliction; therefore she was supported: See that 7 of *Mich.* 9. 10. *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me; he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness*, verse 10. *Then she that is my Enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the Lord thy God? mine eyes shall behold her, now shall she be trodden down as the mire in the streets*: Then she that is my enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which saith, where is the Lord thy God: The Church was confident that she should not only see the footsteps of mercy, but that God would make the very enemies to see it; *She that said, where is the Lord your God?* she that sometimes insulted over me, and blasphemed the name of my God; that said, where

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is your God? time is coming when she shall see it: and I shall say, *Lo here is my God, I waited for him, and he will save me*, and she shall see the deliverance, so as shame shall cover her; she shall be ashamed that ever she opened her mouth against God: And the Church did not loose her expectation, this was fulfilled to the Church; in the 126. *Psalm*, you shall see the fulfilling there of this promise, that she took hold of the 126. 1. *When the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion, then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing; then said they among the Heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them*: When God turned again *Sions* Captivity, when he brought them out of the grave — *Babylon*; the work was so wonderful, that enemies could not but see that the hand of the Lord was in it, so give poor Captives so much favour in the eye of Princes, that they should release them, send them home, countenance them, help them in all they could, help them to build the Temple of the Lord; this could not be if the Lord had not wrought wonderfully for them: The *Heathen* were convinced, *They said among the Heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them*. God makes the very enemies to acknowledge his power and glory, and that he was with his people; in the 2. Chapter of *Exodus* verse 19. God wrought a Miracle by *Moses*, and the *Egyptians* stood out long, but they say in the 19. verse, *Sure this is the finger of God*: Lo they had hardened their hearts, and would not be converted, at last God works a Miracle, and makes them to cry out, *sure this is the finger of God*; look into the new Testament, and you shall finde that

that the Lord Jesus Christ did extort confession from the mouths of his enemies; he made them to acknowledge that he was the Son of God, and that God was with him in those mighty works that he wrought: See the 6. of *John* and the 14. verse. There the multitude followed Christ, when as they had seen the Miracles Christ wrought; then they said, *This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world*; and so in the 7 of *John*, verse 47. When the Officers were to bring Christ to the chief Priests, they returned with their conviction, and they answered, *never man spake like this man*; yea, when he was upon the Cross, in his greatest Eclipse; seemed to be forsaken of all men, even his very friends forsook him, they all forsook him and fled, and he was looked upon as a scorn to all the people; yet even then did the Lord Jesus extort confession from their mouths; See the 27. of Matth. and the 54.

The Point cleared by Demonstrations.

For the further clearing of the Point by Demonstration: God makes sometimes the very enemies to confess that he is with his people, and that he hath dealt wonderously, graciously with them.

Demonst. 1

First of all you shall finde for this, that Jesus Christ hath put up a Petition to his Father, he hath made it his request to his Father, that his Father would manifest so much of himself to his people, that the very men of the world might be convinced that his Father did love him, that the world might be convinced that they were one with God, and one with the Father and one with the Son; for this Christ prays in the 17. of *John*, and the 21 v. *That they all may be one as thou Father art in me, and*

and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me, vers. 22. *And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one*, vers. 23. *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me* that *the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me*: Christ he would manifest so much of himself, and of his goodness unto his people, that not only they may see it, but that the very world may be convinced when they see what God hath done for his people, and what excellent Spirit God hath put upon them, that they may be convinced that God loves them as he loves the Son, that they are one with the Father, as the Son is made one with the Father,

Secondly, The Lord Jesus Christ hath promised this to his people: he was confident that because he prayed for it, it should be given out: he was never denyed any of his requests, and therefore he hath made a promise to his Churches, that he will do such great things for them, that the world shall be convinced that God is with them: See the 3. of the *Revelations* and the 9 verse: *Behold I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lye; behold I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee*: He makes this promise to them, as a recompence to them for their faithfulness, because they had kept close to the word in time of persecution; now as a recompence of their faithfulness and love, Christ makes this promise to them: Well, because thou hast ven-

Demonst. 2

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tured all for me, because thou hast ventured thy name for me, thou hast suffered reproach for me; I will give thee a name, thou shalt have a name in all places, where thou hast been put to shame, those enemies that hated thee, that made a scorn of thee; I will make them to come and fall down and worship thee; I will make them to acknowledge that God is with thee: this is a promise that Christ hath given out, and he will fulfil it to his Churches, those that have kept the word of Christ, those that are faithful to the truth of Christ, to the ways of Christ, in the worst times, though they may suffer reproach for a time, yet at last he wil make the very enemies to confess that he was with them: That's the second Demonstration.

Demonst. 3. Thirdly, Therfore it is that God hath put so much power into his word, to convince the men of the world, and to force them to make them acknowledge that the Lord is with his people, and that he hath loved them, and that he deals graciously with them; I say, for this end the Lord hath made his word powerful, he hath made it sharper then a two edged sword, that it shall serve not only for the conversion of some, but for the conviction of many that are not really brought home to God. The Gospel where it comes, it shall lay chains upon men, it shall lay a restraint upon men; See what is spoken of the power of the word of God, in the first Epistle of the *Corinthians*, and the 14. 24. 25. verses. *But if all Prophecie, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all.* Verse 25. *And thus are the secrets of his heart*

heart made manifest, and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth. See the power that God hath put into his word for the convincing of the hearts of wicked men, that God is in his word, and that God is with his people; the secrets of his heart shall be made manifest, when he comes in, he shall fall down on his face, and say *God is in you of a truth*: It may be, before he came, he had hard thoughts of the people of God; it may be, he was ready to say, that folly was in them, and madness was in them; nay, they were ready to say, that the Devil was in them: Ay but when his conscience lay before the word, when he comes and sees your way, when he hears that God speak in you, such a power shall go along with the word, that it shall lay chains upon him; and it shall make him to fall down and say I was deceived, I was wrong in that I did judge amiss of the people of God; Now I see that God is in you of a truth.

Fourthly, Therefore it is that when God hath dealt graciously with his people, when he hath given out great mercies or great deliverances, he hath ordered it so, that their greatest enemies should be eye witnesses, and sometimes Agents against their will, in doing good to his servants; you shall finde it so, that when God hath so ordered to do great things for his people, he hath made his peoples enemies to be great eye witnesses, and ear witnesses: You see here in the Text, how God doth order the King *Nebuchadnezzar*, that he should be present to see this Miracle, that so a work of conviction should fall upon his conscience; it is a wonder that the King should be present, and

would have thought it should not have stood with the State of the King, to be with three poor Captives, he might have left them to his Officers; but God did so order it, that he should see, that he should be present; and therefore in the 6. of *Dan.* There you may see the Lord made him to be an eye-witness: After *Daniel* was cast into the Lions Den, he could not sleep nor rest that night, and he rose betimes in the morning to see the Miracle, to see the wondrous deliverance that God wrought for his Servants.

Yea, God makes his peoples enemies to be Agents sometimes, in doing good to his Servants, though against their wills, that so he might convince them, and extort confession from them, that he is with his people: In the promotion of *Mordecai*, which you read in the 6 of *Esther*; God did order it so, that the King did command that *Haman* (*Mordecais* great enemy) should be an Agent in his promotion; He was Arrayed by *Haman* with Royal Apparrel; *Haman* was one that *sought Mordecais* life, and God orders it, that this man *Haman* should be an Agent in his promotion, that he should Array him, that he should lead his Horse, and he should cry *Thus shall it be done to the man whom the King will delight to honour.*

Demonst. 9 God works for his people in such away, that Enemies must needs confess that God is with his people.

Fifthly, Therefore it is that God many times works deliverance for his people, because he works it in such a manner, and in such a way as must needs leave conviction upon the hearts of the men of the world, if they be not given up to that fearful judgment of hardness of heart: I say, if they be not given up to hardness of heart; God works in such a way, that they must needs confess that God is with his people.

First

First, The Lord he works *freely* for his people he works freely for his name sake; when there is nothing at all in them, that might deserve the least mercy: God many times gives out great mercies when they can apprehend nothing in themselves: Nay, when the men of the world of look upon them and see nothing in them; they themselves through their grace and humility, see nothing in themselves, and the men of the world see nothing in them; why God should do them good; yet the Lord then many times he gives out great mercies, and works great deliverances for his people.

Secondly, As God works *freely*, so he works *unexpectedly*; and this helps to work conviction in mens hearts, when God works unexpectedly for his servants, when he gives out mercies contrary to expectation; when enemies conclude, Oh they are brought down into such a condition, that it is impossible that ever they should be brought up; yet the Lord he works *unexpectedly*, that so he might work conviction in mens hearts; See that fourth of *Micah*, you shall see how God works contrary to mens thoughts.

Verse 11. *Now also many Nations are gathered against thee, that say, let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Sion.*

Vers. 12. *But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his Counsel for he shall gather them as the sheaves into his floor.* And v. 13. *Arise, &c.*

When they say, let her be defiled, and let our eyes look upon Sion; Why? she is utterly undone, she is brought down, she is destroyed, she lay in her blood, she lay in her heaps, she lay in her ruins; why you are deceived, say's God; I will

work unexpectedly, above your thoughts, you know not the thoughts of the Lord; you say, let your eye look upon *Sion*, you say her destruction is come already; but you know not the thought of the thoughts of the Lord; I will work *unexpectedly*.

Thirdly, God he works sometimes *suddenly*, that he might give conviction to men; when God gives mercies, he does it *suddenly*; when God brings judgements upon the wicked of the world, he doth it suddenly, *their destruction is like whirlewinde*; it shall not come like other windes that do rise by degrees; but as a whirlewind it shall come suddainly, and carry them away before they think of it; and so sometime he compares the judgments that he brings upon wicked men as the breach of a wall that cometh suddainly, See the 30 of *Isaiah*, and the 13. verse, *Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly, at an instant.*

And so when God works deliverance for his people, many times God works it in a sudden way; look into the 126. *Psalm* you shall see how suddainly God wrought for his people, how suddainly he brought them forth from *Babylon*.

Verse 1. *When the Lord turned again our Captivity we were like to them that dreamed.*

Verse 2. *Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing; then said they among the Heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them.*

Verse 4. *Turn again our Captivity O Lord, as the streams in the south.*

He prays and believes that God would turn again

again their Captivity *as the streams in the south*; the streams of the South, they come suddenly; the streams there, they do not arise as other Rivers, they come from several Heads, and so they increase and come broader and broader, that when the rain falls mightily, then the land floods come down suddainly; Why, in such a way doth God work for his people, their deliverances shall be as the Rivers in the South as streams in the south, that shall come suddainly, in a moment, before enemies are aware; And thus doth God many times work conviction.

Fourthly, God he works *solitarily*, he doth it by his own Arme; when enemies can see none to roule away the stone, none to open a door of deliverance, why then God himself he stretches out his Arme; when there is none to bring salvation *his own Arm shall bring salvation*, he will role away the stone, he will open a door of deliverance; and when God doth thus work; this tends mightily to the conviction of those that are by-standers.

Quest. *If you ask but wherefore doth God thus work? Wherefore doth God make very enemies to confess that he deals graciously with his people? Why should they be eye-witnesses of it?*

Answ First of all, because their eye looks upon the afflictions of the Servants of God; and therefore God, he will make them to look upon their mercies; they look upon the misery of the Saints, and they look upon them with delight; and therefore God he will make them to look upon their mercies, and see their deliverances: They say, *Let our eye look upon Sion, and let her be defiled*: Let our eye look upon her, that is, let us behold her ruin-

in, let us glut our ſenſe, and ſay, *thus we would have it: Let our eye look upon Sion*: ſo in the 22. *Pſalm*, you ſhall finde how the wicked do look upon the affliction of Jeſus Chriſt; for 'tis ſpoken of Chriſt, *Pſalm* 22. verſ. 17. *I may tell all my bones, they ſtare upon me*; they look and ſtare upon me. When Chriſt was upon the Croſs, they ſtood looking upon him, and did ſtare upon him; the word ſignifies, they looked with delight, to ſtand gazeing inſatiably. When a man looks upon an object that pleaſeth him, he thinks he never looks enough, he doth enlarge his ſenſe, to take in the ſpeciouſneſs of the thing, and he thinks he never ſees enough; the ſame word is uſed by the Propet *Iſaiah*, 53. verſe 11. *He ſhall ſee the travel of his ſoul and be ſatisfied*: *He* ſhall ſee the travel of his ſoul; he ſhall look upon it with delight, he ſhall gaze greedily upon it; it ſhews his wonderful affection, that Chriſt looks upon his Spouſe with wonderful deſire; that he looks upon the travel of his ſoul, to ſee the fruit of his righteouſneſs, to ſee the benefit of his death; he ſhall look upon the travel of his ſoul, he ſhall gaze upon it with delight; and ſo do enemies, they look upon the affliction of this people, and gaze upon it with delight: and therefore God makes them to look upon the mercies of his people, the deliverances of his people; they ſhall ſee their glory, God will make them eye-witneſſes, God will make them to confeſs that he hath dealt graciouſly with his people.

Secondly, God doth [illegible] mercy to the ſons of men; God would do [illegible] wicked men good, and doth them good even by this; while he works ſuch conviction upon their heart, by eyeing the mer-

mercies and deliverances that he doth give out to his people: God by this he would allure them, he would make them to stand and wonder, while God not only in word, but in his providence doth proclaim before them, *Thus shall it be done to the man whom the King delighteth to honour*: At least, God doth this out of pitty to men that they might not go on to contemn the Gospel; God he will give a check for this; and therefore he works glorious deliverances, that he might restrain them in the ways of persecution; and thus doth the Lord pitty his very enemies: he is better to them then they are to themselves: God he would lay rubs in their way, that they might not go leaping and jumping to Hell: God he will not let wicked men damne themselves as they would, if God should leave them to themselves: And thus doth the Lord pitty his enemies. A word for Application; And so I conclude.

First of all, Here is ground of patience, and incouragement to the Saints in all tribulations, in all adversities, in the midst of your grievous afflictions, in the midst of all the persecution you meet with for Christs sake, for his Gospel sake, for his truths sake; though the world cast shame upon you; there is a coming that the Lord will roul away reproach, and he will make your very enemies to see it, and they that have stood looking upon your misery, with delight they shall be forced to look upon your mercy and therefore here is ground of patience to you in al daversity & what ever you suffer from the world for Christs sake; time is coming that God will make them to condemn themselves, and to acquit you, they shall see your mercy, and they shall say of a truth, God is with his people: 'Tis a ground of

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great comfort to the Churches of Christ in the midst of all the opposition that they meet with, for the keeping of the word of his patience: Oh see the promise that is made to the Churches, in the 12. of *Zachariah*, verse 5. *And the Governours of Judah shall say in their hearts, the Inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord of Hosts their God,*

I will put glory upon my people, saith God, and I will make their Governours to acknowledge it, and they shall say, *The Inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength*; they are the Pillars, they are those that bear up the Land; they are our Chariots, they are our Bulwarks, the Lord *Jehovah* is with them, they shall be my strength.

Secondly, Let it be an Item to the men of the world; Oh take heed how you look with delight upon the miseries of the Saints, upon the afflictions of the Saints; I tell you, God will not bear with it, he will punish you for it; how did God threaten *Edom*, because he stood and looked upon his brother in the day of adversity; he stood in the high-way gazing upon his brothers misery, and delighted in it: I tell you, you that laugh at the misery of the Saints, God he will make you lament and they shall not only rejoyce, but they shall shout for joy; the time is a coming, that he will make you to see the mercy, and that he is with them, and deals graciously with them;

Thirdly, Let Gods people acknowledge this as a great mercy, that God should work conviction many times in the hearts of the wicked, that he should deal in such a way with them that might convince the hardest heart, that God is with his peo-

ple; I tell you, 'tis a great mercy, 'tis no ordinary mercy; admire God in it, bless God for it, that God should thus reprove men, and convince men for your sakes: The *Jews* did look upon it as a great mercy, in the 126. *Psalm*: *when God turned again our Captivity our mouth was filled with laughter and our tongue with singing; Then said they among the Heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them.* They looked upon it as a great mercy that the Lord should thus convince the Heathen; 'tis a mercy, for they writ it, they pen'd it as a great mercy, worth the singing, worth the glorifying of God for: that God should work so powerfully upon the hearts of men, and make the Heathen say, *The Lord hath done great things for them.*

In the last place, to conclude all.

Doth God make enemies confess that he hath done great things for his people? why then the people of God should much more confess that the Lord hath done great things for them: if enemies say it, you may well say it, you have more cause to say it, that 126. *Psalm*, verse 2. *They say among the Heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them*; and what say the people of God? will not they say so? yes, in the very next words, *The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad*: shall the Heathen say it, and shall not we say it? yes, we are bound to say it, and to acknowledge, *The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad*: Remember, I beseech you remember, God cannot endure his mercies should be slighted; he loves that you should have great thoughts of him and of his mercies, that you should say, *he hath done great things*: When God works deliverance

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for you, he will make the very Heathen to say so he will make by standers to say so; and shall not we honour him for the mercy, who are the receivers of the mercy? shall not we say so *The Lord hath done great things for us*: shall *Nebuchadnezzar* say, *The Lord hath done great things for them*; and shall not the three children say so? yes sure, they will lift up the name of God in their song: And therefore I beseech you all, you that have received mercy from God, you should aggravate the mercy as much as you can, though not compulsively, you should freely say, *The Lord hath done great things for us*; you shall find this always hath been the frame of Gods people, to aggravate the mercy, to aggravate the deliverance that God hath wrought for them: See the 40. *Psalm* and the 5. verse. *Many O Lord my God are thy wonderful works which thou hast done and thy thoughts which are to us ward, they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee, if I would declare and speak of them, they are more then can be numbered.*

See what an aggravation there is of the mercy received, they are many, and they are wonderful, and very many, more then can be numbred, they cannot be reckoned up in order: and so *Ezra*, when he and the people received mercies, see how they do aggravate it, how they do acknowledge it, in the 9. Chap. verse 13. *And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass seeing that thou our God hast punished us less then our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this, should we again break thy Commandments?* He knows not how to speak it: Oh 'tis a great mercy, he stands and wonders at such a deliverance, such

such a mercy; and so aggravate all our mercies, we should say with *Ezra*, *seeing thou hast wrought such deliverance, such salvation, seeing thou hast wrought in such and such a way*: this is a great ingagement to God, when mercies are thus eyed and reviewed, when a man looks into the depth of them, and eye the mercies; seeing thou hast given such deliverance, should we again sin against thee? he looks upon it as an ingagement to stand close, seeing it was great mercy: And Oh so should we in all our mercies, as *Ezra* saith, so we should say, *Seeing thou hast wrought such deliverance for us, should we again sin against thee*: Oh no, let thine mercies be an ingagement to us, to love thee, and serve thee, and for ever to cleave to thee.

THE

THE

Sixth Sermon,

On Dan. III. XXV.

He answered and said Lo I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

I Have made some further progress in the words: We considered who it was that gave testimony unto this miraculous Deliverance that God wrought for his servants; It was *Nebuchadnezzar*, a proud and an insolent man, an enemy to God and his people, and so he continues still in his heart; for 'tis probable, he

he was not converted, nor really brought home to God, for in the next Chapter you may see he did return to his very old ways of Idolatry; he sent for the *Magicians* to interpret his dream; and yet God makes him here bear witness what he hath done for his people.

So then we observed this Proposition, *That God sometimes works such deliverances for his people, as breaks his very enemies, and their very enemies to acknowledge that God hath done great things for them*: It was said among the Heathen, in the 126. *Psalm*, *When God turned again the Captivity of Sion, They said amongst the Heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them.* The Lord Jesus many times did extort confession from the mouths of his greatest enemies; *Never man spake like this man*: And *of a truth this was the Son of God*: And then for this thing did Christ pray, in the 17. of *John*, that his Father would manifest so much of himself unto us his people, and pour out so much of his Spirit upon them, that the very world might know that he hath sent the Son; and that he hath loved his people with the same love that the Son is loved: and this did Christ promise unto his people, to the Church of *Philadelphia*, in the 2. of the *Revelations* and the 9. verse: *Behold I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lye; behold I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee*: Therefore hath Christ put so much power into his word, that at least it might lay chains upon wicked men, and convince men many times that God is in his word, and that God is in his people; *When you Prophesie*, saith the Apostle, *and there*

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manner in and that is unlearned; the secrets of his heart is made manifest, and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

Therefore it is also that when God works great deliverances, he doth so order it in his providence, that his peoples enemies should be eye-witnesses, and ear-witnesses, of what God hath done for them, yea sometimes Agents, against their wills, in doing good to the Saints: So *Haman* was an Instrument in the promotion of *Mordecai*: Yea,

Therefore it is that God works in such a glorious manner, as must needs convince, he works *freely*; He works *suddenly*, he works *unexpectedly*, and he works *seasonably*: Now Gods very manner of working deliverance for his people, doth carry a great deal of conviction along with it: As,

First of all, wicked men they look upon the afflictions of the Saints; they say, *Let our eye look upon Sion, and let her be defiled*; Therefore doth the Lord make them to look with astonishment upon their mercies and deliverances; God hath gracious ends, even towards wicked men, he would convince them by this, he would lay blocks in their way, that they might not take the running leap into Hell, that they might not go on in their violence, and persecution of the Saints.

I proceed to what remains: *Lo I see four men, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.*

There were three cast in, and now there are four: Now before we come to consider who this fourth man was; By way, take notice of the wonderful providence of God, that a fourth man should be added to them; that whilst they were in the midst

of

of the fiery Furnace, while they were bearing witnesse against the Idolatry of *Nebuchadnezzar* and his people; while they were suffering Martyrdome for the Truth, and for the Name of God; here is a fourth added to them: Certainly, their enemies supposed that fire would soon have devoured them all, that there should not be one of the three left to bear witnesse any longer against their wickednesse and idolatry; but how contrary doth God work to the expectation of them? their number is not diminished; but *Loe there were three cast in, and now there is four, four men loose walking in the midst of the fire*: Therefore we shall consider this Proposition by the way, before we come to the Main.

That all persecutions that the Devill, or his Instruments, do raise against the Saints, shall not diminish their number, but shall rather increase them. Observat.

I say, all the opposition and persecution that the people of God meet with, for the name and cause of Christ shall not diminish their number, but shall rather increase them.

I shall make it evident to you; Look upon *Israels* oppression by the *Ægyptians*, which you read of in the 1 of *Exodus*, 10. 11, 12, 13. *Come say they let us deal wisely with them, let us increase their task, let us lay heavy burdens upon them*, &c. Thus they thought to have weakened their strength, and to have brought them low, but did this stratagem prevail? no; you shall read in the 12 verse, *Thus the more they afflicted them the more they encreased*: And therefore God did appear to that Church unto *Moses*, in the 3. of *Exodus*: God shews *Moses* there, the vision of a Bush that was not consumed;

this

this did hold forth the state of *Israel* then: a Bush all on fire, and was not consumed; such Bushes are all the Churches of Christ, that men of the world may set them on fire many times. but though they burn, they shall not be consumed; yea the hotter any fire of persecution be against the Saints, the more green shall this Bush be, the more shall it flourish, take root and grow, and spread abroad her branches till it fill the whole earth. This was represented unto *Daniel* in a vision, in the third of *Daniel*: The Kingdom of Christ is set forth there by *a little stone cut out of the Mountain without hands*, the stone was a growing stone, and although there were many hammers at work to break this stone in pieces, yet they have not, nor shall not prevail, but the stone grew more and more, and became a Mountain, and filled the whole earth. Under the Gospell shall give you some instances of of it: To begin

First with Jesus Christ: It was a main design that the Pharisees had to keep men from beleeving in Christ, therefore they resolved that they would take some course to lessen the number of Believers; to lessen the number of his followers; See in *John*. 11. what they feared, and what course they resolved to set upon: 11.48. verse. *Oh say they, if we let him alone all men will beleeve in him, and the Romans will come & take away our place*; Therefore you shall read in the 52. verse that they gave counsel to put him to death; to smite the Shepheard, and the Sheep shall be scattered: they would put him to death that they might not beleeve on him; Behold how contrary doth God work to the imaginations of these foolish men? for by that very thing, by the death

of

of Jesus Christ, is so many thousand, thousand, brought in to believe in him; they would put the Lord of life to death, that they might not believe in him; and it was the Fathers way to make men beleeve in him, *if I be lifted up*, Joh. 12. 32. *And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to me*: And they say, if he be lifted up, there shall be none drawn to him; ay but *If I be lifted up, I will draw all men*: if I be lifted up upon the Cross, if I be Crucified, by this means will I draw all men to me. For,

First, Christ became a suitable object for a poor sinner; a poor guilty sinner could never have looked upon a glorious Saviour, but Jesus Christ he is clothed with garments of blood, that so by that means he became a reconciler: *Without shedding of blood there is no remission*: Here is encouragement given to poor guilty sinners, that apprehend nothing due unto them but wrath; yet by the blood of Jesus Christ, by that new and living way, they come in; and then God the Father too he made a promise to the Son, that because he laid down his life, he should have a multitudinous offspring: in that 53. of *Isaiah*, *In the day that he pours out his soul to death, he should see the travel of his soul, and he should have a large portion*; because he poured out his soul to death for transgressors; so you see that the killing of Jesus Christ, and putting him to death, is so far from lessening believers, that this is the way to draw in all those multitudes of souls that were given to Christ of his Father.

Secondly, Again, If you look upon the primitive Churches, you shall finde that the worlds

perſecution had the ſame effect upon them; there was a great perſecution, a mighty ſtorm, which you read of in the 8. of *Acts*, perſecution begun firſt at *Jeruſalem*; and by that means the Churches were ſcattered: Well, did this tend to the hindrance of the Goſpel, and leſſen the number of Beleevers? No, you ſhall read in that Chapter, that God made this a means to carry the Goſpel to many, other Countries were brought in to beleeve in Chriſt: the great City of *Samaria*; you read in the 6. verſ. *Philip went down and Preached to Samaria*; and this did tend to the furtherance of the Goſpel: in the 8. verſe, *They gave all heed, and there was great joy in that City*: If you look upon the Churches in thoſe Ages, for the firſt three hundred years after Chriſt, there was a moſt terrible perſecution, there were ten perſecutors, ten bloody Emperours that ſought to root out the Name of *Chriſt*, and to deſtroy the Saints; and therefore thoſe that write of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, they tell us, they deviſed all manner of torments; ſome ſpeak of about twenty ſeven deaths they deviſed to torment the poor Chriſtians; Many thouſands, many millions, ſuffered in the time of thoſe perſecutions; and yet this was ſo far from diminiſhing the number of Beleevers, that they were encreaſed: the more they were oppreſſed and perſecuted, the more they encreaſed; and therefore ſome of them did obſerve that *Julian* he uſed all means to ſuppreſſe them; ſhut up all their Schools that they might not have learning; and yet never had they more learning then: He deviſed all manner of torments to terrifie them, and yet he ſaw they encreaſed and multiplied

tiplied so fast, that he thought at last, his best course was to give over his persecution, not out of love but out of envy, because that through his persecution they encreased. And thus you see the Point cleared, That the persecution of the Saints shall not diminish the number of them, but shall encrease them: For the Grounds of it, Briefly,

The Grounds of the Point.

First of all, God delights to walk contrary to men; therefore he will have it thus. He loves to cross the imaginations of the hearts of men of the world; and to set his ways against their thoughts and their ways; in the fourth of *Micah*, the latter end; they say, *Let our eye look upon Sion*; but what saith God in the next verse? *They know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand his counsel*: When men dream that such a way it shall be the utter rooting out of the Gospel, they are mightily mistaken, saith God, *my thoughts are above yours, my ways above yours*: You know not the thoughts of the Lord, for this very way shall encrease multitudes: God delights to walk contrary to men, and to oppose his gracious thoughts, to their cursed imaginations.

1. *Ground.*

Secondly, The Lord Jesus is a mighty King, all power is given into his hand, both in Heaven and earth; and all this power he will improve for the Kingdom of Saints: all is given to him, and he will give all to them: *Neither life nor death, things present, nor things to come, they are all yours*: He hath given all to them, and all shall make for their advantage: In this the power of the Lord Jesus, King of Saints, is mightily seen, that he can turn all opposition to advantage: the greatest perse-

cution that the Devils can raiſe, ſhall all turn to the advantage of Chriſts Kingdom: It is ſo with particular ſouls, *all is yours*, all is yours to do you good; life and death is yours, all given you to ſerve you, and they ſhall work together for your good, for your beſt good, for your eternal good, the Lord makes an advantage of all unto his people; the Devil caſts blocks in their way to hinder them; he turns it to their advantage, and ſo they are helped nigher to himſelf. all the evil of the world, yea all the evil of ſin, and the Devil himſelf, ſhall (though againſt their wills) help forward the ſalvation of Gods people; and ſo Chriſt cauſe all to be for the good of his Church, for the good of his Kingdom all oppoſition and perſecutions which are raiſed to blow down the Kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt ſhall but eſtabliſh it; for 'tis rooted, 'tis a Kingdom that cannot be ſhaken: And then

3. Ground. Thirdly. Men cannot hinder the increaſe of Chriſts Kingdom, for there is no man able to hinder the work of the Spirit of Chriſt from working; *The wind blows where it liſts, and ſo the Spirit of God, that breaths where it liſts*, and where ever he pleaſe to breath; It is not poſſible for man to reſiſt his work: The work of Chriſt by his Spirit upon mens hearts, is a mighty work, an irreſiſtable work; and all the powers of Hell ſhall not be able to hinder the work, 'tis a mighty work, and none ſhall let it.

To apply this briefly;

Application. Use 1. First of all, It lets us ſee the vanity of all the attempts of men againſt the truth of Chriſt, and the people of Chriſt, they are but vain imagi-

nations

nations; men do but imagine a mischievous device, that they shall never be able to bring to pass; it is a vain thing for a man to go about to silence the truth of Christ, or to destroy the Saints of Christ; I tell you, the more the truth is troden on, the more it shall shine; and as it goes with truth, so it goes with Saints, the more troden on in the world, the more loved of God; all the winde of opposition that the Devils can raise from the world, it shall never be able to shake them, though it may shake some particular grains and ears, that they may fall to the earth, but yet they shall rise again, every grain that falls, shall bring forth fruit, some thirty, and some a hundred fold, the more thy are opposed, the more they encrease; persecution shall but sow the blood of Christ the thicker, and sow the ashes of the Saints the thicker, and out of their very ashes shall new converts arise.

And therefore Oh that this might be an Item to the *Powers* of the world to the men of the world, that they seek not to suppress either the truth or the people of Jesus Christ. For truly, the more they endeavour it, the more they shall encrease; if they cast three of them into the Furnace, a fourth shall be presently added to them. An Item to the *Powers* of the world

Object. *But you will say, God forbid any should suppress truth, there is more goes about such a work, but only to suppress error: and you will not say that that is persecution; but that it is rather zeal for God.*

My Brethren, To suppress error, 'tis a good work, 'tis a blessed work; but men must be careful to do it in Gods way. Error in judgment

will a great deal sooner be suppressed by the sword of the spirit, then by any sword of man: I tell you God hath appointed a means for the suppressing of error, and men that stray in their judgments, and that is to be convinced by the word of God, in matters of faith men must be convinced by Gods word: *Our weapons saith Paul, are not carnal but they are mighty through God, to cast down strong holds, and sinful imaginations*: *Paul* did not use carnal weapons to bring down sinful imaginations in the hearts of men; he had used those weapons before he was brought home to God, you know he went for power from the High Priests, to persecute all those that beleeved in Christ; he went to authority to silence them, to stop their mouths and all that he could do; because they pleaded error contrary to the Law of *Moses*; but you do not read that *Paul* after his conversion, did use such weapons, he does not call the help of Men, no says he, the Lord he hath given us weapons: *Our weapons they are not carnal, but spiritual, and so they are mighty through God*: Brethren, I am perswaded it glads the Devil much, when he sees men so violent against error, by drawing the sword against them: I say, it glads the Devil to see men seek this way to suppress them, not that the Devil hates error, or that he loves the truth, for he hates the truth, and loves error; but he knows God will hardly bless that way of men, when men shall neglect Gods Institution, and shall cleave to their own wayes, and to their own inventions; God will hardly bless that way of men, when his own way is neglected.

Besides, Let men consider, that 'tis possible,

that

that while men go about to suppress error, they may suppress the truth for error; unless you shall say any man hath an infallible spirit, or that any company of men hath an infallible spirit; if they have not an infallible spirit, then with what right can they force anothers judgment, anothers conscience? men may, and do many times suppress truth, under the notion of error; we know in the times of Popery, that truth was persecuted that we now see to be truth; our great truth, our main truth of justification by the free grace of God, and the blood of Jesus Christ without work, without merits: I say, how was this truth persecuted? and how did men seek to persecute this truth as error? many things have been persecuted as error, which now we see to be truth; and why may it not be so now? does all truth come into the world at once? and may not we persecute that which afterwards may appear to be a truth? Well let it be an item to men, and let them not suppress the truth of Christ: it is a vain imagination, and men shall not be able to bring it to pass, but the more it is suppress, the more it shall shine, and the more the people of God are opposed the more they shall multiply.

Secondly, Here is a ground of Patience and strong consolation to the Saints in the midst of all opposition and persecution, that they meet with, and may meet with for the name, and truth, and way of Jesus Christ: Hear what Christ saith to you; *fear not little flock*; you think you are but a small number, there is but a few that profess the name of Christ; and Oh if persecution arise it will lessen the number: I tell you, fear not; though per-

perfecution shall not lessen the number, but shall increase the number: though the men of the world may strike at the Tree, and they may beat off many of the branches yet the Lord Jesus he will make use of every branch that is broke off, he will slift it and ingraft it, and so all shall tend to the furtherance of the Gospel and of the truth and of the way of God. *But to Proceed.*

I shall make some entrance into the main Doctrine: Here you see three cast into the fiery Furnace, and *Nebuchadnezzar* saw four: Let us consider then who this fourth man was: *Nebuchadnezzar* could not tell who it was; but he perceived some glorious majesty, and therefore though he was ignorant of Christ: Yet saith he, *The fourth is like the Son of God*: the form of the fourth *is like the Son of God*; that's sure, he is more then a man; God hath sent his Angel and delivered them, but this was in truth the Son of God; This Companion that is added to the Saints in Tribulation, it was Jesus Christ, who did at this time create himself a body, and came down visibly amongst men, that so he might support them, and comfort them, and deliver them, that it might hold forth this unto us, that he would come in his appointed time, to rescue his poor people, that lay under wrath, from all the flames of his fathers indignation, and that he would be present with his people in every condition: when they went through fire and water, in the midst of every Tribulation they should enjoy him; so then here is another main Proposition offers it self, and I shall but bring you unto it, and leave the further prosecution of it:

The

The Proposition is this;

That the Lord Jesus is never nigher to his people, then when they are in great affliction, in fiery tryals. Observat. 3.

I say, Christ is never nigher to his people, then when they are in the greatest affliction: they never injoy more of the presence of Christ, then in sad conditions.

The *three Children*, they never saw Christ so visibly as here they did, when as they lay in the flames; The children of *Israel*, they never saw so much of God among them, as when they were in the Wilderness, in the barren Wilderness, where there was neither meat nor drink, nor clothing, for they had a great deal of the special presence of God, and abundance of the power and goodness and faithfulness of God, was manifested to them in a special manner, while they were in that condition: *Jacob* he never saw such vision of God as at that time when he was driven from his fathers House, when he was forced to fly to save his life; he was in a sad conditihn, he had not a bed to lye on, he had not a pillow to lay his head upon, but took a heap of stones to lay his head upon; and yet in that condition did God come and manifest himself most gloriously to him: he dreamed a Dream, and saw a Vision of the Ladder set up to Heaven, and of the Angel Ascending and Descending, God was there in a special manner; so he saith, *The Lord was there, and he was not aware*; never did he enjoy more of God, then in that condition.

Stephen, the first Martyr, never enjoyed more of God, he never enjoyed more glorious Visions

of

of Jesus Christ, then when he looked through a shower of stones that came about his ears, and took away his life; he saw the arme of the Lord Jesus ready to receive him, to embrace him in the everlasting armes of his love. he had heard much of Christ in his everlasting Gospel; but he never saw him before with his eye. *John* the Evangelist, there is another instance, if you look into the first Chapter of the *Revelation* of *John*, about the 9. verse. you shall see there where he was, and in what condition he was in, when he received those glorious Revelations; he said he was banisht into the Isle of *Patmos*, for bearing witness to the Name of Christ, and the truth of Christ: he was a Martyr and fellow sufferer, and when he was banished from all freinds and comforts, and left naked and destitute of all comforts, the Lord Jesus doth draw nigh, and doth reveal the most glorious Mysteries concerning his Churches to *John*: The *primitive Churches* never enjoyed more of God, then at that time when they were most persecuted by men; in the times of those 10. *bloody persecutions*, the Churches had abundance of the presence of Christ, abundance of the Spirit of Christ, and abundance of the grace of Christ, abundance of holy zeal, and abundance of activity for God, it was poured out upon them, the Lord Jesus never took so much delight to walk among them, as when they were in the midst of the fiery persecution.

What presence of Christ the people of God enjoy in persecution?

Quest. *If you ask me, But what presence of Christ is it that the people of God do enjoy in their great afflictions, and in the midst of their fiery tryals?*

Answ. 1. First of all, they have most of the *supporting* presence of Christ; never more of the *sup-*

supporting presence of Christ, then in sad conditions; he supports the inward man, and he supports the outward man; he upholds the spirits of his people in sad conditions, and he makes their spirits able to bear their infirmity: Now here is a wonderful work of the Lord, that he should strengthen the spirit of a poor creature with such mighty power, as to resist, and to keep out the violence of such mighty tryals, such great afflictions: There is nothing that the Devil seeks more, then to drive affliction home to the spirit, that so he might crush the spirit and conquer the spirit, when he can get in, and ceaze upon the spirit, then he becomes master, and creats a deal of smart and vexation: Now the power of the Lord Jesus is seen, in that he doth support and strengthen the spirits of his people; that when they have but a little strength, no strength, and yet are able to hold out, notwithstanding they are so strongly besieged, and so finely girt many times round about with afflictions; yet he makes that little strength to hold out at that time, that so he is pleased to renew their strength, to give fresh supplies, and to remove the disease, and so the power of Christ is seen in supporting the outward man; many times in the midst of great afflictions: when the Saints meet with great afflictions; afflictions of the body, crosses, such afflictions as might even overwhelm the outward man, and they have but little strength many times, yet the Lord doth so bless that little strength, that though they meet with crosses, that little strength shall not fail, till such time as the Lord do bring deliverance to them.

Secondly,

Secondly, As they have the supporting presence of Christ in the affliction, so they have the *inlightning presence* of Christ; and that's a great mercy: commonly the Lord never teaches his people more then in affliction; when Christ gets them into the School of affliction then he instructs them, there he doth open mens ears, and he doth seal up mens instruction to them, when Christ draws nigh in affliction: I know afflictions in themselves, cannot teach, but when Christ draws nigh, they learn a great deal in affliction; they never see more of God, and of themselves, never more of their corruptions, and vileness that is within them; never see more of the power and way of God, and the mysteries of Christ at that time, when Jesus Christ draws nigh with his enlightening presence:

Thirdly; Jesus Christ draws nigh with his *sanctifying presence*, his people have more of his sanctifying presence in their greatest tryals, when Christ draws nigh to sanctifie their afflictions, to subdue their corruptions, and to strengthen their graces: the *fruit of their affliction, shall be to purge them from sin*; afflictions themselves cannot do it, afflictions themselves harden; but when the Lord Jesus Christ draws nigh in affliction, the Saints do enjoy abundance of the *sanctifying presence*: and through their afflictions they are made partakers of the Divine Nature; their corruptions are subdued and mortified.

Again fourthly, They never injoy more of the *quickening presence* of Christ, then in affliction; I say, the quickening presence of Christ: many times dead hearts, how are they raised up, when Christ

Christ draws nigh to them? how are they elevated above themselves and their own strength, because they are mightily acted by the Spirit of Christ? in the fifth of *Hosea*, you may see there, how God doth promise his *quickening presence* in the time of their affliction; *Hosea* 5. last verse, *I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early*: They were dead-hearted people, and they had lost all activity for God, they were not carryed out with desire after God, they would not stir up themselves to take hold of him: Well, says God, I will make them prize me, I will fling them into affliction, and then in their affliction I will draw nigh to them with my *quickening presence*; *and in their affliction, they will seek me early.*

Again fiftly and lastly, The Saints never injoy more of the *comforting presence* of Christ, then they do in the time of their great affliction; in the 2. of the *Song* of *Solomon*, verf 6. what says the Spouse there in her greatest affliction? *His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me*. As Christ doth support in affliction, so he doth embrace in affliction; he commonly never reveals more of himself, never gives out more glorious manifestations of himself, then in the time of affliction: *I will bring her into the wilderness*, see that place, *Hosea* 2. 14. *I will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her*: she shall have my comfortable presence in the Wilderness, *I will speak comfortably to her*; and so *David*, he had experience of it, in *Psalm* 23.

Thus

Thou art with me, and I will fear none ill, though I walk in the midst of the shadow of death: I will fear none ill, thy rod, thy staff doth comfort me: never more consolations of Christ are given out to poor creatures, then when the Lord brings them into great tryals: he deals as an indulgent Mother with her child, never manifests more love then when the child is sick; though a Parent does restrain love before; yet then she manifests her love the child shall know that the Parents love it, and then she shall bring out all her sweet meats, in the time of sickness: and so doth the Lord bring out a great deal of sweet meats, they have more sweet meats, and sweet drinks that the world knows not of, then in the day of tribulation, in the day of affliction; when it is sad and dark with the outward man, they have meat to eat that the world knows not of, they have the comfortable presence of Christ that the world knows not of: they have never more of the comfortable presence of Christ then when they are brought into great straits, and low conditions.

I shall have no time to come to the Application; but only let me say this to you: You know not what use you may have of this before another Sabbath, the Lord may bring you into afflictions; and therefore remember this truth, hide it in your heart, that so upon all occasions, you may make use of it; and if God do bring you into afflictions submit willingly and readily to him, submit to low conditions, submit to tryals, submit to persecutions; know this, that Jesus Christ manifests his presence; and this is the way to manifest his presence,

sence, I will abundantly comfort you in all your afflictions you lay under, and that you meet with for his names sake; and let it help to strengthen your faith; and truly you had need to strengthen your faith in times of affliction, there is no time in which the heart of men, good men are more ready to faint and give over, then in times of tryal; how did *David* cry out? and how did Christ cry out in his great affliction? *Oh my God my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* In affliction we are apt to think that God hath forsaken us; *Sion said in her affliction, the Lord hath forsaken me:* in her affliction she said, *the Lord hath forsaken me:* and thus an unbeleiving heart is apt to question in times of affliction, *Oh is God amongst us?* as *Israel* said when they were in wants and great straits; Oh then their unbelieving hearts were discovered, though they had seen his Miracles, they tempted God, and said, *is God amongst us?* And the best of Gods people in time of temptation and affliction, may be apt to question, *is the Lord with us?* Now therefore strengthen your faith in the day of adversity, that so you may not faint and dishonour God, and look unto the Lord Jesus Christ, that beholding the Lord Jesus Christ, your faith may be strengthened; remember that it is his way to give out much of himself to his people in times of affliction; and therefore never say, *is the Lord with us?* but expect to meet with God, conclude the Lord is with you, and he will be with you in the time of affliction; and remember you shall never have more of his supporting presence of his enlightening

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ing presence; his comforting presence; his sanctifying presence; and of his quickening presence: I say, you shall never have more of the presence of Christ, then in such sad conditions: strengthen the feeble hands and knees, and look to the Lord, that your faith may be strengthened.

THE

THE

Seventh Sermon

On Dan. III. XXV.

He answered and said. Lo I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

The handling of the Doctrine lastly named, is put off to the next Sermon, this not being preached in the same place with it.

FRom *Nebuchadnezzars* Testimony of this Miraculous Deliverance that God wrought for his Servants. This Proposition was handled the last day: *God often times works such deliverance for his people, as he makes their very enemies to confess, that he hath done great things for them*: He made the very Heathen to con-

confess that God hath done great things for his people: When God did turn again our Captivity, in the 126. *Psalm*, *They said among the Heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them. I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan* (saith Christ) *which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee*: but this Point is concluded; and therefore I shall proceed; For I desire to keep time, and to be short in these morning Exercises: Well then, let us go on, and look upon the Restraint that God layd upon the fire: Consider the effect of Gods command, and the effect of his prohibition; God had given command that the fire should not burn them, that the fire should burn and dissolve their chains, and their fetters that were upon them; they were cast in bound, bound hand and foot; but God had commanded, and the fire obeys; it takes part with the three Children, to loose their fetters, and set them at liberty; they were cast in bound: And low, now says *Nebuchadnezzar*, *I see four men loose*. God had layd a prohibition upon the fire, and it obeys the commandment, that it should not burn them, that it should not touch their, bodies, it should not stop their breath, that it should not so much as singe one hair of their head, or scorch their garments, and the fire is obedient to the word of the Lord; they were walking in the midst of the fire, and they had no hurt: I shall put the particulars together, because I would make hast, they hold forth this *Proposition*.

That at the Commandment of the Lord, the fiercest of Creatures shall not only not hurt his people,

Observat. 6.

but

but shall take part with them, and do them good.

I say, At the command of the Lord, the fiercest of Creatures, shall not only not hurt them, but shall side with his people, to take their part, and do them good: The fire cannot hurt, nay the fire takes part with them, nay the fire sets them at liberty.

First of all, I shall shew you that the Creatures cannot hurt.

And then secondly, That they must of necessity take part with the Saints, and do them good.

First of all, they cannot hurt; The *water* of the Red Sea, it could not destroy the *Israelites*; The *Lyons*, though fierce creatures, yet they could not open their mouths against *Daniel*: The most *violent men* of the world cannot hurt, when God lays a restraint upon them; you know *Laban* was not able to speak so much as a hurtful word to *Jacob*, because God met him, and layd a restraint upon him; *Take heed that thou speak to Jacob neither good nor evil*: God would perswade his people of this, in that 54. of *Isaiah*, verse, 15, 16. God would let them know that they were not able to lift up a weapon without him; nay, they could not so much as make a weapon without him; the Smith could not so much as blow the fire to form a weapon without the Lord; Thus saith God, I have power over all creatures, and over all the actions of creatures; a weapon cannot be lifted up, for the workman cannot so much as lift up his hand to blow the fire, unless God permit him; a Dog cannot bark against a man, unless God give leave, the barking of a Dog will do little hurt; yet a Dog could not so much as bark

againſt *Iſrael*, when the Lord lay a reſtraint upon them; God would carry them quite out of the land of *Ægypt*, and not one Dog ſhould move his Tongue at them; as you may ſee in the 11. of *Exodus*, verſ. 7. you ſee the creature cannot do the leaſt hurt; for a Dog cannot do ſo much as bark, he cannot do ſo much as move his Tongue, when God lays a reſtraint upon them.

Secondly, The creature cannot hurt, but they muſt do good to Gods people, at his command; if the Lord will make choice of any creature to do his people good, he will effect his own deſign, it cannot be hindered, he will do them good by any thing he will do them good by any creature, by the moſt violent creature: Who would have thought that the fire ſhould have done theſe three children good? that the fire ſhould take their part? and yet the fire at the command of the Lord, does looſe their bonds, and ſets them at liberty: Who would have thought that the waters at the red Sea ſhould have done the *Iſraelites* good? and yet they were abundantly uſeful to them in their paſſage through the red Sea; you ſhall read in the 14. of *Exodus*, verſ. 22. that the children of *Iſrael* walked through the Sea, and the waters were a wall to them on the right hand, and on the left; the creature that might have been their deſtruction, became ſecurity to them; their way was made ſtrait to them, they could not go out of their way, for the Sea was a wall to them on the right hand, and on the left: Who would have thought that the Ravens ſhould have done *Elias* ſo much good? that the hungry Ravens, creatures that are of ſo greedy an appetite, ſhould ſpare meat

meat out of their own bodies, to feed the Prophet? yet so it was, as you may read in the first book of *Kings*, 17. vers. 6. God makes the very Ravens to be careful Nurses to *Elias*; when he was in the Wilderness they brought him his meat in the morning, and in the evening: Who would have bin thought that the belly of the Whale should have a protecting place to *Jonah*? that it should save him from destruction? yet God he made use of it, and he made the belly of the Whale to be a place of safety to *Jonah*, the Whale kept him safe till she carryed him and set him on shore: So that you see God can do his people good by any creature, he can make them all to be useful. Sometimes he works by *improbable* means, and sometimes by *impossible* means: I say, sometimes God doth his people good by *improbable means*; to have Honey out of the Rock, and Oyl out of the Rock; you will say this is improbable, and yet this is his promise that is made to *Israel* in the 32. of *Deuteronomy*, vers. 13. *And he made him to suck Honey out of the Rock, and Oyl out of the flinty Rock;* He speaks of the fruitfulness of the Land of *Canaan*. God made the barren places fruitful, and he made the very Rocks to bring forth, yea the very flinty Rocks to be fruitful; the Rocks gave them Honey, and the Rocks gave them Oyl: That is, (as I conceive) God made the very Rocks to bring forth trees, and trees brought forth pleasant fruit, the Rocks brought forth the Olive Trees and the Date Trees; and so they had Honey out of the Rock, and Oyl out of the Rock. You know that it was impossible that *Israel* being carryed into *Babylon*, they should be carryed again into their

own Country, and while they were in *Babylon*, they seem to be in the grave: What a mercy was it that God should stir up their enemies to be a defence to them? and to have them to be assisting of them? and to stir them up to the work of the Lord, to work in the Temple? you know God wrought by that means: And so how improbable was it, that *Josephs* accusation by his Mistress, that his fetters, his chains should be his advancement? and you know God wroeght that way, and he made *Joseph* to be lift up, and made the second man of *Pharaohs* Kingdom.

Yea God works sometimes by *Impossible means*; you see it was impossible that the fire should have been a protection to these three Children, to loose their bands, and set them at liberty, and be a place to walk in; and yet it was at the command of the Lord. He can turn the very stones into bread; He can send bread out of Heaven, as to *Israel*; and give water out of the Rock, as to them in the Wildernes; He cannot only work without means, but by *impossible* means: And thus you see at the command of the Lord, all creatures must obey; He can do his people good by Improbable means, and by Impossible means;

The Grounds of the Point.

For the Grounds of the Point; Why creatures cannot hurt, but they must do good to the people of God?

First of all, Because they must all go along with God; and where God is a friend, they must be a freind; where God will not hurt, they will not hurt, for they all go along with him: *Balaam* could not go against the word of the Lord: *If Balack would have given him his house full of Gold and Silver,*

Silver, he could not go againſt the word of the Lord: and therefore when he would have had him curſed the people: *Oh* ſays *Balaam, How ſhould I curſe, when God hath not curſed, and defie whom God hath not defied?* This is the voice of all Creatures; *how ſhall we curſe, when God hath not curſed?* and how ſhall we hurt, when God hath not hurt? they are all obedient to the word of the Lord, to the command of the Lord; all creatures obey that word of the Lord that he gave them when he firſt created them; ſee the 148. *Pſalm*, what is ſpoken there of all the Creatures of God, they obey that Law he gave them.

Verſe 6. *Who hath alſo eſtabliſhed them for ever and ever, he hath made a Decree which ſhall not paſs.*

Verſe 7. *Praiſe the Lord from the earth ye Dragons and deep waters*: And ſo in the 8. verſe, *Fire and Hail, Snow and Vapours, ſtormy winds, fulfilling his word*: They all obey that Law of God that God gave them, they all keep their bounds, they willingly obey the Word, the Command of their Creator; and therefore it is that the Sun does riſe and ſet, that ſo might fulfil the word of the Lord; the Sea that ebbs and flows, and ſo all creatures they keep their Motion and their Station that ſo they may fulfil the word of the Lord; and keep that Law that God gave them at the firſt Creation, when he put them in order, and ſet them in their bounds. Yea, ſometime God doth give another word to them, he doth alter the Law that he made at their Creation; and he gives a new word of command, which is contrary to nature, and then alſo the creatures they obey that word

word of the Lord; See what God commanded in the second Book of Kings. 20. 9. 10. verses.

Verse 9. *And Isaiah said, this signe shalt thou have of the Lord, that the Lord will do the thing that he hath spoken; shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go backward ten degrees?*

Vers. 10. *And Hezekiah answered, it is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees; nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees.*

Vers. 11. *And Isaiah cryed unto the Lord; and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the Dial of Ahaz.*

See, God he can alter the Law of nature, and at his command, the Sun shall not only go forward, but it shall go backward; if God say, Sun stand still, it shall not move; and if God say, Sun go back, it goe h back ten degrees: Thus you see that all the creatures, they obey the word of the Lord, they fulfill every command of God; if he say to the winde, winde arise, arise and blow, it presently fulfills his word; if he send them about any work, and he say, go and carry destruction upon your wings, to such a party, to such an enemy, they presently fulfill the word of the Lord; and then if he say, go and blow such a man profit, carry blessings in your wings, the winde that presently fulfills the word of the Lord; they are all his creatures; therefore they must go along with the Lord; they are all his servants, and therefore they attend him; they are all the Army of the Lord; and all the Host in Heaven and earth are his Army, and therefore they must obey the word of their General; they must obey his word of Command; they are all at his Command: And

there-

therefore I say, where God is a friend, the creatures they must needs be friends, they cannot do hurt, for they all go along with God.

Secondly, The creatures they cannot hurt, but they must do good to the people of God, for God hath made a Covenant with all the creatures for his people; There is a League made with all the creatures, even with the meanest of creatures; God hath not left one out of the League: See the 5. of *Job*, verse 23. *For thou shalt be in league with the stones in the field, and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.* Now because God hath made a league with them, therefore of necessity, First of all they must do no hurt, for that is one end of their League and Covenant: When there was a League made between *Laban* and *Jacob*; see what is the end of it, *Gen.* 32. 32. and that *thou shalt not past over this heap, and this pillar unto me for harm*: that's the end of the League and Covenant, that so they that are in League and Covenant, may not harm one another: Now God hath made a Covenant for his people, with all the Creatures; that is, God he hath layd an Injunction upon them, that they shall not do the least harm to his Servants.

Object. *But you will say, may not Creatures be hurtful to the Servants of God? May they not perish by fire and water, and have their lives taken away by Creatures? Was not Stephens life taken away by stones? how then does God make a League with the stones in the field?*

Answ. I Answer, 'Tis true they may, when God commands them to take away the life of his own people; but still I say, they cannot do them

hurt,

hurt, they do but take away their lives, if they could send them to the torments of Hell, send them to the pit of destruction, that would hurt them indeed; but they cannot hurt them, though they be instruments to take away the lives of the Saints, yet they do them no hurt; for they do but send al em to their Fathers house, they help them the sooner to God, to rest in the Arms of Jesus Christ, where they shall rest for evermore.

Secondly, Because there is a League with the Creatures, they shal do them good When *Jehosaphat* entred into Covenant with *Ahab*, there was an ingaging to do all the good he could, *my men are as thy men, my horses as thy horses*, and all that's mine as thine: And so saith God to the Creatures, I have put so many particular good things, good qualities into your nature, that so you may convey them to my servants; and therefore I charge you be serviceable to them, give out all the good you can, let them enjoy all the good that I have given to you, for I made you for their sakes: and therefore of necessity they must give out the good that God hath given them, they must do the people of God all the good they can, because God hath made a Covenant with the Creature: And this Covenant that God hath made with the creature, is grounded upon the great Covenant, the everlasting Covenant that he hath made with his people in Jesus Christ, there comes in all the good that we receive by creatures; God hath made an everlasting Covenant with his Son, in which he hath promised to be their God; to take them into Union and Communion with himself, to be their portion, and to give himself to them: And there-

therefore because God hath given himself to them, all creatures also are given to be useful and beneficial to them.

Thirdly, The Third Ground of the Point, The Creatures must needs do good, they cannot hurt, but they must do good to the people of God, because of Gods watchful eye over them; the more hurtful and violent any creature is, the more doth the Lord set a watch over them, his providential eye is over his people; I say, the Lord doth watch over them with a special, providential eye. See what is said in the Prophesie of *Isaiah*, concerning his Vineyard; *I the Lord will keep it, I will watch over it every moment, least any hurt it; I will keep it night and day, least any hurt it*: I will keep it night and day. See then there is a special eye of providence over the Saints that are the Lords Vineyard; and therefore 'tis not possible the Creatures should hurt it. God he watches over his Vineyard for this end, least any hurt should befall it; *I will watch over it every moment*; 'tis true other wicked men, they are kept from harm by a common providence of God, they have their lives preserved; but still 'tis but a common providence: But there is a special eye, and a special providence of God over his people, least any hurt should befall them; there is no time, no moment, that God doth lay aside his watchful eye, and not watch over his people; And therefore there is no time that any harmful creature can step in to his people to do them hurt; they all come under the providence of God, every creature comes under the providence of God; and therefore the Lord he is able to prevent the harm.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, The Creatures they are all given to Jesus Christ, as he is King, as he is the great King; All power is given to him in Heaven and earth: Now Christ he hath reconciled the Creatures, and therefore the creatures cannot be hurtful to the Saints; the Lord Jesus Christ hath reconciled the creature: *He hath reconciled all things in Heaven and Earth*, and made them all friends; and therefore the creature shall not do harm to the people of God: See the Promise that is made to the Church, in a special manner it shall be fulfilled in the latter Ages; *Hosea* 2.18. *And in that day will I make a Covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fouls of Heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground; and I will break the Bow, and the Sword, and the Battle out of the earth, and I will make them to lye down safely*: This Promise is made to the Churches in the latter days. When they shall enjoy abundance of Jesus Christ, when they shall have abundance of the Spirit of Christ; why then shall those promises be fulfilled in a great measure, they shall enjoy peace with the Creatures: *In that day I will make a Covenant with them, in a special manner, with the beasts of the field, and with the fouls of Heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground; and I will break the bow, and sword; and there shall be no hurt in all my holy Mountain*: we are all reconciled to God by the blood of Jesus Christ; And therefore they cannot hurt the Saints, but do them good.

Application.

Briefly to make Application, and so concludes.

If the fiercest of Creatures you see cannot hurt; The fire it cannot hurt, but it must do good, when God

God commands; take notice then of the mighty power of the Lord: Oh know that he is a great King, and his name is dreadful over all the worlds do but look upon the powerful command of God, what effect it hath upon the Creatures: 'Tis impossible they should transgress, he hath set them bounds that they cannot pass; they are all ready to obey his Command; if he say go, they go; and if he say come, they come; why this will make it evident. That God is a God of infinite power, to command so many Creatures, so many thousand thousand Creatures, as God doth order every day; and that God should make them obedient to every command of his, that none can transgress the least command; but they must fulfill his word, when he sets them about it; Oh this declares that God is a God of infinite power, and doth what he pleaseth.

Secondly, What a shame is it to the sons of men that they will not submit to the Lord? Will not the Creatures rise up in judgment against men? When the Creatures fulfil the word of the Lord, and you disobey the word of the Lord; shall God have more service from senceless Creatures, than from the sons of men, that was made Lord over them? Certainly this will be their iniquity another day, and the very creatures will condemn them: See what God says to that fire; fire, burn not: it cannot so much as touch the hair of the head: If God say to the fire, fire, burn their bands asunder; set my children at liberty, the fire it burns their bands and fetters, and sets them loose, that they were able to walk in the midst of the fire.

And

And so all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth, and the Sea, they all keep their bounds; *Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further*; the Sea, a raging Element, it obeys the word of the Lord: The Lord says to the Sun, *Sun run thy race*, it obeys; *stand still*, it stands still, and is obedient: Now shall all Creatures in their places obey the word of the Lord, and shall not man? Oh what a shame is this to the sons of men, that they should disobey the word of the Lord? That God should speak but one word to the Creatures, and they should obey, and that he should speak so many to the sons of men, and they not obey: That God comes again, and again, and speaks in his Ordinances, and still man walks contrary to God: when he lays a command upon them; this is the command, That you beleeve in Jesus Christ, and renounce all your own righteousnes, and rely upon the Righteousnes of the Son of God, and still men disobey: What a shame is it, for man to disobey, and all the Creatures that the Lord hath given to him, to obey?

Thirdly, Here is a great Incouragement, and strong Motive, to those that are strangers to God, to come in and submit to him: Oh that the Lord would perswade your hearts to come in and submit to him! So long as you are strangers to God, see the danger you are in; you are liable to be harmed by all Creatures in Heaven and Earth; they are all at the command of the Lord; they all obey his word; If God say to the least of Creatures go and take away the life of man; avenge my quarrel upon such a Rebel, the Creatures obey: The Lord can arm the least of his Creatures; a

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fly, he can make that take way the life of man; And therefore 'tis a miserable condition, to be a stranger to God and Christ, to be out of Covenant with God; you have no Covenant made for you and therefore you are left to harm of the Creatures every day: Oh that the Lord would perswade you to come in, to cast away your own righteousness, and to submit to the righteousness of the Son of God, and to make a close with him, and with his Son, and then all Creatures, will take his part; and if God be your freind, they will be your freind; and if God will not curse, they will not curse; and if God will not hurt you they will not hurt you; for they are all obedient to the command of their Maker.

Again in the fourth place, To make haste; This may let us see, that it is not in Creatures to do us good without: I say, 'tis not in the power of Creatures to us the least good without God: We are apt to look too much upon Creatures; you expect too much from Creatures, and too little from God; and therefore it is that oftentimes we are disappointed: I tell you, they cannot do us the least good, without the command of God; the very meat you eat, it cannot refresh you, unless it have a command from God, and a blessing from God, and the very clothes that you wear, cannot warm you, unless they have a command from God; there is no creature can do you good unless it have a command from God, and a blessing from God: I beseech you take notice of it: Oh we are apt to propound such and such things to our selves if we had such a portion of the creature: men think, Oh if they had such an Estate, so much

riches,

riches; and if they were in such places of honour, and if they had so much wealth, and such and such a creature, such and such freinds and relations: such meat to eat, and such drink to drink; and such clothing to put on; then they should be satisfied, and their lives made comfortable; I tell you, my Brethren, 'tis a great mistake; if you had those very creatures you would have, still they could not satisfie you, nor make your lives comfortable: If God do not come along with the Creature, the Creature cannot satisfie you: God he can make your lives comfortable in the want of Creatures; 'tis as God will come in; and 'tis as God will bless: See what *Job* propounded to himself, in that 7. of *Job*, vers. 13. *When I said, my bed shall comfort me, my Couch shall ease my complaint*: Though Creatures be never so likely of themselves to comfort a man, if God will not make use of them, they cannot comfort: What more likely to give *Job* ease, then his Couch, then his Bed? he had wearied his body, and his Bed and his Couch is a place of ease; but I cannot finde it so, saith *Job*, I expected that it should ease me, I will lay my head upon my Pillow, and take my rest, but I could not finde it; no, it terrified my thoughts: and truly freinds, you may think of all the Creatures you enjoy, you may think that the Creatures will comfort, but if God doth not make use of it, it cannot comfort you; and if God will make use of any Creature, it shall comfort you: If God make use of imprisonments, bonds and fetters, they shall be ingagements to you, and make you sing in the Stocks at midnight; God can say to the Creatures go and comfort:

You

You know when God commanded the heaps of stones that *Jacob* laye his head upon, to give him comfortable sleep, he slept well that night, he slept better upon his heap of stones, then he did upon his pillow, when God makes use of the Creature to comfort; and therefore do not think you have comfort from Creatures, as Creatures; tis God that must come in and bring comfort to you, for God can make every Creature comfortable; and the best of Creatures cannot comfort, if God do not come in.

To Conclude all.

Fiftly, Here is matter of great comfort to the people of God; it may be a Prop to their faith, to their confidence; if they consider this, that all the Creatures are at Gods command, and God can make use of any Creature to do them good; he can make use of their Bonds; it is a mighty comfort to you that are the people of God, to remember this upon all occasions, where ever you are, in your way, in your journey, in your voyages, whether you be at Sea or Land; still remember, that all the Creatures they are your Fathers Host, they all fulfil his Command, they cannot disobey his Law, they cannot hurt you without commission: Nay, though they be hurtful, yet he can do you good by them! Oh how quietly may Gods people walk in the midst of all Creatures, when they are at Sea, and when they are on land? in the midst of dreadful Creatures, they may walk safely, for why? they are at your Fathers command, and they cannot do you the least hurt, though they be hurtful in themselves in their own nature; and therefore upon all occasions

strengthen your faith in the Lord: *what shall we say to these things*, saith the Apostle in the 8. of the Romans, the latter end: *If God be for us, who can be against us?* I tell you, you may challenge all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth, if God be with you; if he be your portion, if he hath received you into Covenant, and you have made a close with God: And therefore in all places and dangers, walk by faith; strengthen your faith in the mighty power and goodness of God, that hath the Command and Rule over all Creatures.

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Eighth Sermon

On Dan. III. XXV.

He answered and said, Lo I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

Have handled many Propositions out of these words. The last day, we considered that Addition that God made unto these Martyrs when they were suffering for his Name sake: There were but three cast into the fire, where as their enemies looked that they should have been all consumed, and

none left to bear witness any longer against their Idolatrous ways, the Lord makes an addition to them; there is a fourth that joyns himself to them to bear witness with them unto the truth of God, which they suffered for.

Hence we raised this Proposition.

That all the oppositions & persecution that the people of God meet with for the Name and Truth of Christ, shall not diminish their number, but shall increase them

I shewed how the children of *Israel* were multiply'd by those oppressions, and heavy burdens that were layd upon them in *Egypt*; the more they oppressed them, the more they encreased, saith the Text: I gave you an instance in Christ; what counsel did the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* use, in the 11. of *John*, to hinder the number of beleevers? *If we let him alone, all men will believe in him*; Now they thought they would take a sure course that none should beleeve in Christ; *They put the Lord of life to death*; *smite the Shepheard and the sheep will soon be scattered*; but this did not diminish the number of Believers; no, God did out reach them, and made this the way to bring in men to believe in Christ: *If I be lifted up*, saith Christ, *I will draw all men to me*; The Lord Jesus by dying, becomes a suitable Object to poor guilty, unclean sinners, which durst not else have drawn nigh to the glorious Father: and *Because he poured out his soul as an offering for sin*, the *Father gave him a portion with the great and mighty*, so that the number of Beleevers were increased, and not diminished by this mischievous device against him. The Primitive Churches *persecution* that was raised in *Jerusalem*; it did help to the in-

increase of the Gospel, and number of Believers; The Apostles and Brethren were scattered, in the eighth of the *Acts*, so they carryed the word up and down, and by their means many were brought in to God: *Samaria*, a great City, many in it were converted; *They went and preached every where, what Philip spake, and there was great joy in that City*. I shewed you out of Ecclesiastical story, that all the persecutions, those bloody persecutions the Church met with, did not diminish, but did increase the number of Believers: The Lord delights to walk contrary to wicked men, to cross the corrupt imaginations of the men of the world; *In those things wherein they deal proudly, he will be above them*; he will let them know, *that his thoughts are above their thoughts, and his ways above their ways*. When they say concerning *Sion*, *Let her be defiled, and let our eyes look upon her*; let us see her desolation. *They know not the thoughts of the Lord, nor understand his Counsel*; for the event shall be quite contrary their expectations. The Lord Jesus is a great King; and therefore it shall be so; All power is given into his hand in Heaven and in Earth, and he will order all for the advancement of his own Kingdom: all is his, and he hath given all to the Saints; *All is yours*, all shall do them good, all shall further and increase their graces, and the increase of his Kingdom. There is none can hinder the Lord from pouring out of his spirit, there is none can hinder the spirit from working; and therfore the opposition cannot hinder the increase of Believers: *The wind blows where it lists*, and so the Spirit of the Lord, breaths where it it pleaseth: Man may as well stop the Sun in the

Firmament, or hinder the Sun from shining, and the winde from blowing, as the Spirit of the Lord from working grace; he darts in beams of light, beams of conviction, to the hearts of Creatures; and his work is an irresistable work, all the powers of Hell and darkness shall not be able to hinder his work; Therefore I conclude this Point, with an Item to the men of the world; To take heed how they seek to oppose the truth of Christ, and the people of Christ; this is not the way to diminish their number, no, the Lord he will out reach them in all their designs of persecution; the hotter persecution shall but increase the number of the Saints, they shall but sow the blood of Christ and their ashes, the thicker, and if one fall to the ground, a hundred shall rise up in their stead.

But I entered into a second Point, in which I shall proceed. After we considered who this fourth man was, *Nebuchadnezzar saw four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God*, it was indeed the Son of God: It was the Angel of the Covenant, the Lord Jesus, who did assume a body at this time, and came down to refresh his Servants in the fire: It holds forth this, That he would in time come to deliver poor servants from the fiercer of his Fathers wrath; That he would be present with his people in all afflictions, in the midst of all their fiery tryals.

The Proposition that I entered into is this.

That the people of God never enjoy more of the presence of Christ, than in their lowest conditions.

When they are in great afflictions and fiery tryals,

als, the Son of God is with them. Here you see it in this fiery tryal; *Israel* never saw more of God, then when they were in the barren Wilderness: *Jacob* never had such glorious visions, as when he was driven from his house and home, when he was seperated from all creature comforts, had not so much as a Bed to lye on, nor a pillow to lay his head upon, but layd him down upon a heap of stones; then had he those glorious Visions of the Ladder set up to Heaven, and of the Angels ascending and descending. *Stephen* never saw such glorious Visions of Jesus Christ, but when he was yonder a showre of stones that took away his life; *He looked up*, then *and he saw the Heavens opened and the Son of God at the right hand of the Father*, ready to recieve him. The Apostle *John* never had so glorious Visions, as when he was banished to the Isle of *Patmos*, then did Christ reveal those glorious Mysteries, written in the Book of *Revelations*, concerning the Churches to the end of the world. The *Primitive Churches* enjoyed most of Christ in the time of persecution they enjoyed most of the presence of Christ, and most of the mind of Christ, most purity, and most holiness, they had most of the supporting presence of Christ, *then his left hand it put under to support a poor Creature*, when it is in a low condition, in a sinking condition, in an afflicted condition: He supports the inward man, and he supports the outward man; he makes a little strength to go a great way, as the Oyl in the widows cruse, till such time as he sends deliverance unto his people: They have never more of the *enlightning* presence, of the *teaching* presence of Christ, then

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in such conditions; Affliction is Christs School, in which he teaches his people many precious Lessons; they have never more of the *quickening* presence of Christ, then in such conditions: never more of the *Sanctifying* presence of Christ, he is pleased to make use of affliction, to knock off that unevenness many times that is upon their Spirits, and make them partakers of his own nature. They have never more of the *comforting* presence than in such conditions; he brings his people into the Wilderness, there he allures them and there he speaks to them; then he puts under his left hand to support them, and then his right hand embraces them: But, What are the grounds of the Point? Why doth Jesus Christ manifest most of himself to his people in their afflicted conditions.

The Grounds of the Point.

First of all he knows that then they have most need of his presence. If ever they have need of comfort; if ever they have need of strength, of teaching, quickning, guiding; 'tis then when they are in afflicted and low conditions, then is a mercy sweet, when 'tis in season; and then 'tis seasonable, when a poor creature stands in need of it: The Lord Jesus knows that they have need of his presence in low conditions.

First because of the weakness of the flesh; And,

Secondly, Because of the strength of temptation.

1. Because of the *weakness of the flesh*: *He knows his people frame, and remembers that they are but dust*; and therefore he pities them; He knows how unable they are to bear, and how little time they are able to hold out; and therefore

fore sometimes the Lord Jesus hath spoken comfortable words to his people, when they have expressed a great deal of weakness in them: See in *Matt.* 26. when the Disciples could not watch with him; at the 41 verse, they could not watch with him one houre, though he was in great extremity, and they might have expected a sharp reproof from him: the blessed Jesus he looks upon them, and he pities them, he rather excuses them, and comforts them. *Oh! The Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak*: He knows what the weakness of flesh is, for he was partaker of our flesh and blood, he remembers it since he was in the days of his flesh, how weak the flesh is; *he is partaker of our flesh and blood*, saith the Apostle; he knows what it is for a poor creature to grapple with fears, with inward fears, ever since he poured out his strong cries unto his Father, with tears; none in the world are so sensible of affliction, as they that have gone under the same affliction themselves; the Lord Jesus he is sensible of all the weakness, of all the sorrow of his people; he knows by experience what they mean; he knows what it is to be weak, and he knows what it is to be in fear; he knows what it is to grapple with the wrath of his Father; he knows what it is to want his Fathers Countenance; he knows what it is to be acquainted with sorrow, with grief; there was none so acquainted with them as he: See what the Prophet *Isaiah* says of him, in *Isaiah* 53. vers. 3. *He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief; and we hid, as it were, our face from him: A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*: grief and sorrow were his greatest acquaintance,

tance, when he was upon earth; they were his acquaintance from the beginning of his life, and they were his companions from first to last. From the wombe to the Crosse, they were the acquaintance that Christ could never shake off; his old acquaintance, when all his friends left him; when his Disciples left him; in affliction did they leave him; but his grief did not leave him, he was always acquainted with it, and he was acquainted with all sorrows, with all grief, grief of all sorts; he knows what spiritual sorrows are, and therefore he will pity people his under them: a natural man cannot pity a poor creature that groans under spiritual sorrow, he knows not what they mean, what it is for a poore creature to groan under corruption, and cry out of the want of a believing heart, and of the want of Gods presence; but now the Lord Jesus is acquainted with these sorrows also, he had experience of them in his own person. The woman that hath been in Travel, pities another that is in the same case; the Lord Jesus, he newly come out of Travel, he remembers his pangs still; and therefore he pities poor creatures when they groan under grief and sorrows, for he was acquainted with them himself.

2. Again secondly, He knows they have most need of his presence, in afflicted conditions, because they are most nigh to temptations; and he knows what temptations are; he knows the strength of Temptations; he knows that it is the Divils policy, to drive home temptation to the spirit of a poor creature at that time when it groans under affliction; and therefore he knows that then a poor creature, if ever, stands in need

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of the presence of the Lord Jesus; when Satan stands at the left hand to resist, Christ had need to stand at the right hand to comfort and support, and strengthen; and therefore the Apostle saith; that he was tempted in the days of his Flesh; in that 2. of *Hebrews*, vers. 18. *Being tempted, he is able to succour those that are tempted*: he knows by experience what it is for a poor creature to be tempted; he knows that temptations are most grievous to a gracious heart: Temptations are worse then afflictions, and therefore though a poor creature stands in need of succour in affliction, yet much more in temptation; When temptation goes along with affliction, Oh then the Lord Jesus knows that there is need of his presence: When a City is besieged, and the Inhabitants within it be disquieted, and the enemie hath raised their Batteries, and makes breaches upon the Walls, and their Provision grows low; Then, if ever, they have need of succour: Truly so it is with a poor tempted soul; when it is afflicted Batteries are made against the Spirit; provision, strength, is little, knows not how to hold out; then the Lord Jesus, he is their friend; and therefore in such conditions, he usually makes best to afford his presence: That the first Ground of the Point.

The Lord Jesus knows, if ever, then they have need of his presence, when they are in low conditions, for then the Flesh is weak, and then temptations are strong.

Again secondly, The Lord Jesus manifests most of himself to his people in low conditions, because he remembers the kindness of his Father, when he

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was in the same condition; I say, he remembers the kindness of his Father unto him, when he was in low conditions; now he will requite this kindness upon them, that kindness that God the Father did shew to Jesus Christ when he was in affliction, and in low conditions; I say, he will requite it upon his people, it makes deep impressions upon the heart of Christ; the love that his Father shewed him when he was here in the days of his flesh, when he was in weakness, and was in perplexity, and was in distress, he cannot forget it: You know what impression *Jonathans* kindnesse made upon *David*, because *Jonathan* shewed him kindnesse when he was in distress; his kindness made impression upon his heart, that he could not forget it; he inquired for some of his children, that he might requite the love of their Father, which he shewed to him when he was in low conditions; *Jonathan* shewed him kindness when *Saul* persecuted *David*, *Jonathan* stept between *David* and him, and was a faithful friend to *David*, and therefore saith *David*, I will requite his kindnesse; if I can finde but one poor *Mephibosheth*, that calls himself a dead Dog; yet *David* shews a great deal of kindnesse to him, to requite the kindnesse of *Jonathan*: And so doth Jesus Christ, he goes up and down to inquire in the world, where is the Seed of God, the Sons and Daughters of the most High, that I might shew them kindness for my Fathers sake: Oh he shewed me kindnesse when I was in distress, and therefore I will do the like to them, when they are in affliction and low conditions; Oh saith the Lord Jesus, I remember since your Fa-

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ther and my Father, took care of me when I was helpless; he formed me in the womb, and he cover me out of the womb; he guarded me all my life long, Thirty years and upward, when I was in the midst of the world, with Bears and Tygers; I remember how he sent his Angels to comfort me when I was wearied out by Satans temptations; Nay, I remember when he stood by me, when all left me and fled; when all left me, that I had none in the world to stand by me, the Father stood by me; and therefore I will lay all this kindness upon you his seed: The last kindness that the Father shewed to the Son, it took mighty impression upon him; that his Father did not leave him alone, but was always with him; And therefore Christ he often makes mention of it, in that 16 of *John*, vers. 32. *The Father hath not left me alone, but he is with me* all my life long; he never left him alone: yea, when he was in his affliction and low conditions, the Father did not leave him alone; See that 16. of *John*, vers. 32. *Behold the hour comes, yea is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me*: This made deep impression upon the heart of Christ; that the Father did not leave him alone, when he was in his affliction, when he was persecuted; when all his friends upon earth fled from him, then the Father did not leave him? And therefore the Lord Jesus Christ, he did [illegible] retain this kindness; and he will not leave the Sons and Daughters of God alone in low conditions, but he will be present with them; though they be in the fire and water, he will be sure to

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comfort them with the same consolation, wherewith his Father comforted him, when he was in the same distress; That's the second Ground of the Point.

Thirdly, Christ will shew most of his presence in afflicted conditions, because he remembers his Ingagement; he is ingaged then to manifest most of himself.

First of all, He is ingaged by his *Promise* and *Covenant*; He hath promised to be with them always; he hath promised never to leave them nor forsake them: as the Father promised to be with him in trouble, so he hath promised to be with them: You may see his Fathers promise to him, in *Psalm* 91. 15. *He shall call upon me, and I will answer him, I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him, and honour him.* Now as the Father made a promise to be with the Son in trouble, so hath he made a promise to be with his people in trouble: See that promise in the 43. of *Isaiah*, vers. 1. 2. how he hath promised to be with his people in all Tribulations, in the midst of the fire and water, and fiery tryals; nothing shall separate betwixt him and them, he is always making good his Promise; and therefore he will fulfill it to them.

Secondly, He is ingaged by a Law of *Love*; There is a Law of Love written in the heart of Christ; he takes delight in his people, they are the joy of his soul: as the 16. *Psalm*, at the beginning of it, it is spoken there of Christ, [illegible] *in the Saints*, saith Jesus Christ, [illegible] *Earth*; All my delight is in them, next to the delight that Christ hath in his

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Father; to that Infinite, Incomprehensible Light; *his delight is in his Saints*, in his people; and therefore because he loves them, because he delights in them, he will be present with them; he loves their presence; wherever they are he loves to be with them; though their condition be never so sad; though they be in prison; it shall be a Heaven to Christ, because he bears dear love to them; he loves to see their face; he loves to hear their voice, he loves to injoy Communion with them; he loves to be giving out of himself to them: and therefore he made it his great request before he went to Heaven, that his Father would make room for his people, as you may see in *John* 14. beginning of the third verse: *And if I go and prepare a place for you; I will come again and receive you unto my self, that where I am, there you may be also*: he tells them, he would have them with him in the same place; they shall enjoy the same glory, and they shal have no worse room than he shall have in his Father, *John* 17. 24. *That those who thou gave him of his Father, might be with him: Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may be with me, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world.*

Father, I desire that they may be with me; I desire thou shouldst bal them to welcome to Heaven as thou hast me; and that they may possess of the same glory, as I do; that they may be in the same place, that they may always see my face, and I may see their faces, for my delight is in them: Heaven could not contain Christ without

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the presence of his Saints; and it is a second Hunt ven unto Christ, to be present with them here upon earth; wherever they are, or whatever their condition, though be never so low; though they be in prison, in chains, in the stocks, the Lord Jesus loves to be with them; he carries them about in his heart, and therefore he cannot be absent from them.

Again Thirdly, He is ingaged by a Law of *Friendship*, to be most of all present with them in their low conditions; the Law of friendship binds him to it. Affliction is a Touch-stone, it discovers fained friends, and real friends; it shews whether a friend be Cordial or no. By the Law of Friendship, a man is bound to stick to a friend in the midst of all his adversity, and then there is most need of a friend: It was a reproof unto *Hushai*, that *Absalom* gave him in that second of *Samuel*, 16. 17. *Is this thy kindness to thy friend? why went you not along with your friend?* David was a friend to *Hushai*, and saith *Absalom* to *Hushai*, *Is this thy kindness to thy friend?* why wentest thou not along with thy friend? This shall never be said of the Lord Jesus Christ, that he broke the Law of friendship: It shall never be said of Christ, is this thy kindness to thy friend? Why wentest thou not along with thy friend? Thou wentest not along with thy friend, but thou forsookest thy friend, when thy friend had most need of thee; no, the Law of Friendship is in Christ's heart, and he will keep it; and therefore he will stick close, and most close to his people, when they are in low conditions.

Again Fourthly, There is a fourth ingagement; He is present with his people most of all in low con-

conditions; in afflicted conditions, because being ingaged to *look after his work*, 'tis the work of Christs own hand; he sends afflictions for that end, to work something in the heart of his people: and therefore he is ingaged to see what becomes of his labour and pains, that he may not loose his cost and labour: When a Physician gives a Purge to a Patient, he is ingaged to see what becomes of his Physick, how it works: So the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Physician, he never gives any bitter Purge, any bitter Pill of affliction to his servants; but he looks upon himself as ingaged to look after it, that he may look after his Physick, and see how it works: the very presence of Jesus Christ will help the Physick, if it work too much, or too little; if the soul dispise the chastening of the Lord, or faint under the chastening of the Lord; the Lord Jesus can by his presence help: When the Gold-Smith puts his Gold into the Furnace, then he is ingaged to be present to look after his Gold; and so is Jesus Christ when he puts his people into the Furnace of affliction; he is ingaged to look after his precious Gold, that so none may be lost and consumed in the fire: You see the Grounds of the Point.

Quest. *If you ask me, how doth Christ give out much of himself in afflictions? By what way or means doth Christ communicate much of himself in afflictions? Briefly for answer;*

Answ. First of all, he doth raise up his people's faith unto a high pitch; many times, I say, he raiseth up their faith to a more then ordinary pitch: he clears the eye of faith, and strengthens the eye of faith: Now the more the eye of faith is clear-

ed and ſtrengthened, the more it ſees of Jeſus Chriſt: Now the Lord he doth mightily ſtrengthen faith; many times in affliction faith is ſtrengthened, for faith is left alone many times, and then it works beſt; all props are taken away, God takes away all ſence, many times, and leaves faith to work alone; now faith never works better then when 'tis alone; it meets with a great deal of oppoſition; and faith is ſtrengthened by oppoſition; the nature of faith doth take his riſe by oppoſition; the more oppoſition it meets with, the higher it riſes: The woman of *Canaan*, what oppoſition did her faith meet with? that which was a diſcouragement to her, yet from that diſcouragement, her faith takes a riſe; and becauſe Chriſt ſays, ſhe is a dog, therefore ſhe is confident that ſhe ſhall have Crumbs of mercy before ſhe goes away: When faith is put to extremity, then it becomes ſtrong: When faith is exerciſed in extremity; I having wavered a long time, at laſt it ſees that it muſt either beleeve or periſh, beleeve or ſink; it fares in ſuch a condition, as with a man that is to paſs over a River, he being afraid that the Bridge ſhould not bear him, ſtays long before he dare venture; at laſt he ſees the River ſwell higher and higher, he goes to make an offer, and puls back his foot, he dare not venture; at laſt the water ſwels up to the neck of the Bridge, and he ſees there is no way but one with him, either he muſt venture upon the Bridge, or elſe periſh in the water; and then he conſiders, that many have gone over that way, and many have been ſaved that way, and it hath born up many, thouſands have gone over before,

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well he ventures: and so doth many a poor soul waver many times, draw back his foot, dares not venture upon Christ, can he bear me up? and will he bear me up? may I venture? God he puts faith many times to it, puts it to such a strait that the soul must venture or perish, believe in Christ alone, or perish; faith here many times takes a rise; that's the first way whereby Christ doth communicate much of himself in affliction, he many times lifts up faith, and strengthens faith; Now the more strong faith is, the more it sees, the more it apprehends of God.

Secondly, He pours out the Spirit of *Supplication* many times upon his people when they are in low conditions; he makes them to cry out, to cry a main to him, as he cryed to his Father in his distress, he puts up his cries; He *puts up his requests with strong cries and tears, and he was heard of his father*; And so the Lord Jesus he doth pour out of his spirit upon his people, that he may stir up their souls in such a way as Christ is taken with; *Let me see thy face, and let me hear thy voice*, saith he, *for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely*, 'tis melody to Christ; Christ draws nigh to hear the melody; and the nigher Christ draws the more evidently the soul sees him.

Thirdly, The Lord Jesus by affliction, or in affliction he *draws the hearts of his people nigher*; Then he doth bring them back many times from their wanderings, from their straglings. *Before I was afflicted I went astray*, saith *David*. The Lord Jesus by affliction, he brings them nigher to himself, he causes them to wait more upon him, to

eye him more, to keep closer unto him, and to take heed of straging: Now the nigher the soul is brought to Christ, the more it sees of him, though it be not for our waiting not for our believing, our walking, that Christ doth manifests himself: Commonly when Jesus Christ manifests much of himself, he will draw his peoples heart to look towards him, and wait upon him.

Fourthly, He manifests most of himself in affliction, *by his word which he sends along with affliction*: Commonly, I say, when Christ doth afflict his people, he sends his word along with affliction, some word of instruction, or some word of promise, or some word of Counsel; there is some word or other that goes along with affliction, that so Christ may teach them before they go out of that sting: Now the word of grace the word of Promise, it is the Chariot on which Christ rides; he doth by them draw nigh, by his word he draws nigh to the soul: and therefore when the word comes with evidence, Christ comes along with the word, and then the soul sees most of Christ, because Christ sends such a word to the soul in affliction; which word he comes along with & in which word he conveys himself to them.

Quest. *It may be some of God people will say, Alas if this be true, that Christ manifests most of himself in affliction, what shall become of me? I have had no such experience, I cannot say that I have had most of God in affliction, I have not enjoyed the presence of Christ in many afflictions.*

Answ. Why art thou one that hast closed with Christ, and received the mercy of the Gospel? Why

Why then certainly it cannot be, but that thou hast seen something, or thou mightest have seen something of Christ in affliction; do not say thou seest nothing of Christ in affliction; do not say thou hast not enjoyed any of the presence of Christ in affliction; hast not been supported by Christ in affliction; and is that nothing, saith thou to support a poor creature under affliction? Hast thou not been supported by the strength of Christ or by some word of Christ in affliction? And hast thou not said as *David* said, *I had perished in my affliction, if thy word had not been my stay?* hath not Christ given thee some secret Refreshment in affliction? surely he hath been nigh to thee and thou wert not aware; he hath fed thee in affliction, and thou didst not take notice of it; *Joseph* he fed his Brethren and they did not know it was *Joseph*; And so Christ he doth give sweet refreshments to his people, and they do not take notice of it; they do not consider that it is Christ that supports them: Oh thy Spirit had sunk under affliction, if it had not been Christ that had upheld thee!

Object. *Ay, But if it had been Christ that had supported me in my affliction, I should have gained by my affliction, I should have seen the benefit of my affliction; but I see nothing at all, affliction is come and gone, and left nothing behind.*

Answ. Hast thou seen nothing, no benefit? Why resolve again to wait through, though thou hast not seen, thou maist see; and these afflictions that have been layd upon thee, though they be gone, the fruit of them may be to come. When

man takes Physick, you cannot expect that he should have health the same day, strength the same day, he must wait some days after; and see how his strength comes in, and then afterward he perceives the benefit of his Physick; and so it is with affliction. God may, and doth do his people good by affliction, though they saw little benefit while they were under affliction: The rain doth make the earth fruitful; but the growth of the corn 'tis not seen presently; wait a while, stay a Week or a Fortnight, and then look into the Field and you shall see the rain was beneficial to the Field, and so 'tis with afflictions, they are as rain, when the Lord Jesus comes along with them he makes them very beneficial to his people; Ay, but the growth is not discerned presently: No, stay a while; But do not thou say in unbelief, I shall get no good by my affliction; no thou hast got good by thy affliction; The Lord hath said it, he hath said That *All things shall work together for their good*; he hath said, that *He will purge away their sins*; he hath said, that *we are made partakers of his Divine Nature, by affliction*: and therefore give not way to unbelief, do not by unbelief, shut out the blessing, but believe that it shall be as God hath spoken, and though thou hast not seen the accomplishment of the promise, go and wait upon God, watch over thine own heart, look to thy self, the Weeds grow as well as the Corn: you know how it was with Jeshuah, and therefore we had to need watch

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over our own hearts, and know thou shalt get good by affliction; for God hath spoken it, and it shall be accomplished unto thee in the Lords due time; for the Lord will fulfill his word.

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Ninth Sermon,

On Dan. III. XXV.

He answered and said, Lo I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

YOu may remember the *Proposition* in hand; Namely, *That Christ is never nigher his people than when they are in great afflictions, in fiery tryals*: He entred into the Furnace here; into the fiery Furnace, that he might save his people harmless. I gave you the Grounds the last day; why Christ draws nigh to his people, and why he doth communicate

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most of himself in their afflicted & lowconditions.

First of all, he knows that they have most need of him, they have most need of him because of the weakness of the flesh; and because of the strength of temptation; he knows the flesh is weak; and therefore he expresseth pity and compassion to his Disciples, when they could expect nothing but fury from him, they could not watch one hour, when he stood in need of them; and yet the Lord Jesus pities them; *The flesh is weak, but the Spirit is strong*; he knows what the weakness of the flesh is; and he himself was partaker of our flesh, that he might know experimentally what the weakness of the flesh is; and therefore well might *Isaiah* say, *He was a man of sorrow; a man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief*; he was a man of sorrow all his days, and he had no other acquaintance almost but grief and sorrow when all his acquaintance left him, his grief and sorrow followed him, even to the very grave; and therefore there is no grief, no sorrow, but the Lord Jesus had experience of it, that he might know how to pity his people in their weakness, and when they lye under their burdens.

Again, He knows the strength of temptation, he knows what it is for a poor creature to be tempted, for *he was in all things tempted like unto us*, saith the Apostle: He had experience of all manner of temptations; he knows how to relieve his people under temptation, he knows their straits, when they are besieged; he knows how the force of Satans Batteries are; he knows that in their weaknesses the Devil takes advantage against them, and then above all other times in-

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deavour to drive home the darts of his temptation into their Spirits; and therefore the Lord Jesus because they have most need of him, he pities them, and relieves them at that time.

Again, He remembers the kindness of his Father to him in his low condition, and therefore will shew the like kindness to his people in their low conditions; he remembers that his Father did not leave him in his straits, and therefore he will not leave them in their straits: The kindness that God the Father shewed to his Son when he was upon earth, took such an impression, made such an impression upon the heart of Christ that he can never forget it; but he will always labour to requite it, by shewing the like kindness to the people of God in their distress: Oh how was he taken with that kindness, that *The Father would not leave him alone?* how often doth he make mention of it; *I am not alone, but the Father is with me?* and therefore he enquires for some of the Saints of God, that he may shew the like kindness unto them: *David* remembers the kindness that *Jonathan* shewed him, when he was in his low condition; and therefore *David* enquires for some of his children; *Is there none left of the house of Saul, that I may shew kindness to for Jonathans sake?* though there be but one poor lame *Mephibosheth*, one that is lame of his feet, that is no fit companion for a King; yet for *Jonathans* sake, and for the kindness *Jonathan* shewed to *David*: *David* shews great kindness to *Jonathans* son, took him, and set him at his Table: so doth Jesus Christ deal, he remembers the kindness of his Father, the kindness the Father shewed him in his

his low condition; says he, is there none of the seed of God? are there none of the children of the most high, that I may shew kindness to, for the fathers sake? Because he shewed kindness to me in my low condition; and though he can hear of none but poor lame *Mephibosheth*, yet he shews kindness to them, takes them into communion with himself, sets them at Table with him, and in the midst of their low conditions will afford his presence, because his Father & their Father did not leave him alone when he was in low conditions. Again, The Lord Jesus he is bound unto this by many ingagements; I say, he is bound to be present with his people in low conditions; He is bound by his *Word*, by his *Promise*, by the *Law of love* that is in his heart: *All my delight is in the Saints, and those that be excellent*; it is a second Heaven to him, next to the presence of the Father, he delights to be in the presence of his Saints, and therefore because he delights in them he will be present with them, though they be in the prison, in chains and fetters, though they be in the fiery Furnace; yet it is a Heaven unto Christ to be with them; *for all his delight is in his Saints*; He is bound also by the *Law of friendship*, to be with them in low conditions; a friend is tryed in adversity; it was a reproof to *Hushai*, when he left *David* in straits; and therefore says *Absolom*, is this thy kindness to thy friend that thou wouldst not go along with thy friend? It shall never be said so of the Lord Jesus, it shall never be said of him, Why didst thou not go along with thy friend? for he will go along with his friend in the greatest adversity: he will not leave them, but afford them his presence. Again,

Again, He is bound because his work is in hand; A Physician is bound to look after his Patient, because he hath given him a Purge: And so the The Lord Jesus is bound to look after his Patient when he hath given him a Purge; Gold-Smith is bound to look after his Gold when he hath put it into the Furnace: And so the Lord Jesus is bound to look after his Gold when 'tis in the Furnace of affliction.

But I come to the Application.

Use. First of all for *Instruction*: This lets us see the wonderful unparalel love of Jesus Christ; I beseech you take notice of it, and get your hearts affected with it: here is such love as creatures cannot shew, a friend that will never leave one; a friend that will always afford his presence, in the greatest straits; afford his presence, that's a friend indeed; a man may be brought into such conditions, as all his friends may forsake him, all men upon earth may leave him; *David* was left of his best friends; Father and Mother forsook him: and Jesus Christ was left of his best friends, *they all forsook him and fled*; and truly this may be the condition of any man upon earth, cast out and forsaken of friends, of most friends, of best friends: will a friend venture his own life for a friend? will a man keep his friend, when some deadly infectious disease is upon him? when he hath a plague sore upon him? will he then lye down in the bosome of his friend? when a man is condemned to the flames of fire, when a man is cast into the fire, will a friend follow him into that condition? Truly such friends you will hardly finde upon earth; but this is the friendship of

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Jesus Christ to his people: when he first looks upon them he saw how many plague sores, infectious diseases were upon them, and yet that could not hinder him from drawing nigh, and affording his presence, and from working mightily by his spirit, upon their hearts: Nay, when they are brought to fiery tryals, to great afflictions; yet even then he will not leave them, and he will not forsake them; and this makes the love of Christ the more remarkable, that he should thus condescend when he was at the highest, for he is now advanced above the Heavens, he sits down at the right hand of the Father, he is at the highest condition, and yet he is pleased to condescend to the lowest condition, he is pleased to come down when they are in the depths, in the greatest straits that possibly can be; what love was that the Spouse speaks of, in the 5. of *Canticles*, and the last verse: she speaks a great deal of the beauty of Christ, and in the last words she makes her boast of her Beloved: *This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend, Oh Daughters of Jerusalem*: I will compare with you all; I will compare my friend to all the friends in the world; *This is my Beloved, and this is my friend*, she compares him for for his beauty; and so you may compare him for his love; you may make your boast of the Lord Jesus; you may say, *This is my Beloved, and this is my friend.*

Secondly, What a strong Motive may this Doctrine be unto such as are strangers unto Jesus Christ, to come in and submit unto him? What glorious Benefits may you be partakers of? What a desireable thing is it to have such a friend as Use.

Christ

Christ is, which will be present with his friends in their lowest conditions? Oh that every man would sit down and consider that which *Solomon* speaks of, to remember the days of darknesse, which will be many; many days of darknesse may come upon the earth, what a favour will it be to have a friend in the darknesse? a friend that will stick by thee when thou art in the dark, a friend that thou mayst take hold of his skirts when thou art in the dark Entry; a friend that will hold thee fast when thou art in the dark: such a friend is Jesus Christ to all that do embrace him: Oh what a favour, what a mercy will it be, to have a friend stand by thee, that is both able and willing to help thee, when all Creature-comforts shall fail, when the very strength of body shall fail? to have a friend stand by to help and succour? and truly such a friend is the Lord Jesus: what saith the *Psalmist*, in the 73. *Psalm*, vers. 26. *My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever*: heart and flesh fail, and then there is a strength above nature, the Lord then is the strength of my heart, and of my flesh and blood: What a mercy will it be, to have one stand by you, when you go through the valley of the shadow of death, a friend then to comfort, a friend then to uphold? such a friend is the Lord to his people; *David* was confident of this, therefore you see how his faith triumpheth in the consideration of it, in *Psal.* 23. vers. 4. *Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear none ill*; Why? *For thou art with me*; see what a mighty confidence was raised up in *David's* heart; and what was the

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ground of it? The presence of the Lord? *Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear none ill*: why? *For thou art with me*; he doth put cases of the most uncomfortablest condition that may befall him; *valley of the shadow of death*, though I be brought down from the Mountain, and walk in the valley; and though this valley be a dark way, though it be a shadow of death, that is, though it be never so dreadful; and though it be so full that all the world cannot save you, even then, when I am in such a condition, and walk in the valley of death, I will fear none ill, *for thou art with me*; so long as I have thy presence, my soul is upholden: you read in the 4. of *Revelations*, at the 6. verse, that this world is like a sea of Glass: *I saw before the Throne a sea of glass*: there the world is shadowed out unto you, and the condition of men that are in the world, the world is like to a sea of glass: and Oh that men would remember this; if it be a Sea of Glass, what need have you of a friend to stand by you? you that are Travelers in the world, you walk upon a Sea of Glass; Oh what need have you of a friend to take you by the right hand, to uphold you? there is none but Jesus Christ, none but his presence can uphold you in this Sea of Glass: and if this world be a Sea of Glass; Oh what need have we to take Jesus Christ into the Ship, into the heart, that so he may be our Pilot, and he may guide you safe? Oh do but think in what fleet Jesus Christ will stand you, when the storms arise, and the waves dash [illegible] when it may be the body of the Ship shall be split in pieces; Oh what will it be then for a Saint to

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to uphold the Spirit, to bear up the spirit, and take the soul upon his own shoulder, to bear it above wrath and amazement? Now do you apprehend this to be desireable? Oh that the Lord would make your hearts to close with Christ, to accept of Christ, and the tenders of mercy now held forth in these days of grace! I tell you, the time is coming, when you shall see weakness written upon the tops of the Mountains; they will say, look to your selves, for we cannot help you; now will not the presence of Jesus Christ be desireable to you in such a condition? Oh then I say, accept of him, he freely tenders himself to you now in this day of grace; and Oh that the day of grace might not be slighted! his presence is desireable in such a strait, and is he not now desireable, that so you may hav ehim in such a time of need?

But Thirdly, This let's us see, that there is not such great evil in affliction as men apprehend; men fear affliction, and flee from affliction as from Toads and Serpents, and connot endure to think of affliction, cannot endure to think of the day of darkness: I say, there is not so great an evil in affliction as men apprehend, for the Lord Jesus is present with his people in affliction; and there is no reason why you that are the people of God should inordinately fear affliction, and why you should inordinately seek to be delivered from affliction; seeing you may possibly enjoy more of the presence of Jesus Christ in affliction, then ever you did in other conditions? would a loving wife be afraid to go into a dark place where she shall meet with her Beloved? Why should you

you be afraid to go into a dark place when you shall meet with the presence of Christ? Remember that Expression of the Martyr, when he was ready to suffer death, he breaks forth into this expression. *Come fire, and come wild beasts; Come rack of the body; Come breaking of the bones; Come all the torments in Hell, that all the Devils in Hell can afflict with, I care not so I can meet with the presence of Jesus Christ*: Remember how many of the Martyrs have ventured into the flames to meet with Christ? they have willingly sacrificed their lives that they might meet with Christ: shall *Peter* venture into the water, and shall the Martyrs venture into the fire, and shall you be afraid to enter into an afflicted condition, where you may meet with the presence of Jesus Christ.

There are two things that make the people of God to fear affliction inordinately:

2 Things that make the people of God to fear affliction.

1. First of all, Either they do not beleeve that they shall meet with the presence of Christ in an afflicted condition. Or

2. Secondly, They do not beleeve that the presence of Christ will countervail the bitterness of affliction.

Now I shall endeavour to clear both these, and to perswade you that are the people of God: First of all, that you shall certainly meet with Christ in affliction: And then that his presence will countervail the bitterness of affliction.

First I say, You shall certainly meet with Christ in your affliction; for first of all he hath spoke it, he hath promised it, he hath set a part the time and place of his own appointment; he hath given out the word, the word is out of his

mouth, and 'tis under his own hand written, 'tis under his hand and seal, that he will meet with his people in afflicted conditions, he hath said in the 5. of *Job* verſ. 19. that *he will deliver thee in ſix troubles, and in ſeven*; and every Promiſe is under the Hand and Seal of Chriſt: and ſo in the 43. of *Iſaiah*. God promiſeth there, to *be with his people in all their afflicted conditions*; in their greateſt afflictions: In the 43. of *Iſaiah*, and the ſecond verſe, *When thou paſſeſt through the water, I will be with thee, and through the Rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee, when thou paſſeſt through the fire thou ſhalt not be burnt, neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee*: the fire, that is in the greateſt ſtraits: in thy greateſt affliction, when the waters are ready to overwhelm thee, I will be with thee, and lift up thy head; I will be with thee in fiery tryals, when flames are ready to conſume thee, I will be with thee: I ſay, you may be confident of it, becauſe the Lord Chriſt hath given it under his hand and ſeal, that he will give your ſouls a meeting in ſuch a condition; Is there any thing that can hinder Chriſt from performing this his promiſe; he cannot forget his word, he cannot miſtake the time and place, he cannot be hindred by any outward impediment: I ſay,

1. Firſt of all, He cannot forget his Promiſe, though he hath ſpoken many years ago, yet the Lord he cannot forget his promiſe, he is always mindful of his promiſe: See in the 105 of *Pſalms*, and the 16. Chapter, and the 15. verſe, *He is mindful always of his Covenant, the word which he commanded to a thouſand generations*; though the promiſes be given out never ſo long ago, ſuppoſe

it be a thousand generations, yet the *Lord is always mindful of his promise, always mindful of his Covenant, to a thousand generations*; a man may promise his friend to meet with him, but it is possible a man may forget his promise, but so cannot God, he is ever mindful of his promise.

Again, He cannot mistake the time, happily a man though he hath promised, yet he may mistake the time, he knows not how the time passes, and so may be deceived; but it cannot be so with God, he knows all times, all creatures; *Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world*, Acts 15. 18. Nay, he cannot be hindred by any impediment; his Father will not hinder him; he was willing to spare him out of Heaven for many years together, that so he might be present with his people, and all creatures cannot hinder him from performing his promise; see the 27. of *Isaiah*, verse 4. *Fury is not in me, who would set the Briars and Thorns against me in battel? I would go through them, I would burn them together*. The greatest opposition was briars and thorns to Jesus Christ; briars and thorns before devouring fire, will soon be burnt; and therefore upon this you may be confident, seeing the Lord Jesus hath given out his word, he will keep time and place with you.

Again Secondly, You may be confident of his presence in affliction, because affliction is for this end, it is the main end that Christ in affliction may meet with his people, that he may draw them into nigher communion with himself, that they may see more of him, & that they may enjoy more of him, and he enjoy more of them; that he may

make use of affliction to remove that which is in the way between him and the soul, to subdue corruption, and to strengthen faith, and to draw forth grace, to heighten the holiness, and the grace of the soul; and to comfort the heart, and all that the soul may enjoy more communion with Christ; he doth take his people into a by-Lane, as I may say, in every affliction that he may speak unto them; he *took the Spouse into the wilderness that he might speak to her*; and so doth Jesus Christ when he takes his people into a by-way, it is, that he may speak something more to them, that he may speak freely, and speak something that may be for their good; he doth not speak in affliction, because he delights in affliction, he doth not delight in their afflictions; he doth not afflict that he may be satisfied; no, afflictions they are not their punishments, for God hath satisfaction at the hand of Jesus Christ, and therefore it relates to something to come, that he may with this Chastisement draw the soul more nigh, and see more of him, and enjoy more of him, more of his presence, of his love, more communion with him, that he may comfort, strengthen and support, and sanctifie; and therefore seeing it is the end, the main end of affliction, that Jesus Christ and his people may meet and converse together; certainly Gods people must not slight this his afflicting them, must not slight this main end of God.

Object. *But if Christ do meet with his people in affliction, the presence of Christ cannot countervail the bitterness of the affliction.*

Answ. But it will to the full, for there is that

in the presence of Christ, which may supply the wants of all creatures: I say, there is all goodnesse, all sweetnesse gathered together in the Son of God, which is scattered up and down in Creatures, and therefore in Heaven the Saints need no creature comforts, they need not the light of the Sun, nor the light of the Moon; and there all recomfortable relations are broken a pieces, there is no husband, nor wife, nor child, Master, nor servant; why? because the good of all these lations do meet in Christ, and the good of all these relations shall be supplied by the presence of Christ, and therefore Christ tells his Disciples in *Mat* 22. 30. *In the Resurrection*, (saith he) *they neither marry nor are given in Marriage, but are as the Angels of God in Heaven*: they neither marry nor are given in Marriage; that which is the most comfortable relation in earth there is no need of in Heaven, 'tis too poor, too needy for Heaven, there shall be no marrying nor giving in Marriage; and as the comfort of all other relations shall be found in Christ. In him there is a perfection of all goodnesse, of all sweetnesse; now you cannot meet with the fulnesse of these in any condition; there is a fulnesse of joy in Christ, a fulnesse of good in Christ; what says the Psalmist in *Psalm* 16. v. last. *In thy presence is fulnesse of joy, at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore*, there is a fulnesse of joy in the presence of Christ; there is not a fulnesse of sorrow in any condition; no, there is a mixture of Mercy in every condition; the evil that a Soul meets with is not infinite, there is not a fulnesse of sorrow, but in the presence of Christ there is a fulnesse of joy, there is

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that which can abundantly countervail the evil that is met with in any condition; if all the evil under the Sun were met together in one condition, and a Soul brought into it, yet it might find in the presence of Christ that which may answer that condition, the presence of Christ will comfort, and support, and raise up a Soul in that evil condition; and therefore you shall find that the presence of Christ hath made the Saints to rejoyce in Tribulations, to joy abundantly. The Apostles rejoyced that they were counted worthy to suffer for the Name of the Lord Christ: it doth fill the Soul with holy joy, heavenly Raptures, yea the presence of Christ hath been astonishment to the Soul many times when it hath been in a sad condition: see what *Paul* saith of himself in 2 *Cor.* 12. 2. *I knew a man in Christ about 14 years ago, whether in the Body I cannot tell, or whether out of the Body I cannot tell, (God knows) such a man whether in the Body, or out of the Body was caught up into the third Heaven*: some think this vision of *Paul* was when he was in a sad condition, it was immediately after his conversion, when the sight of his Body was taken away by blindnesse: Now it is supposed when *Paul* was blind in his Body he had this Vision of Christ; you may see what abundance of sweetnesse he found in Christ, it carried him beyond himself, he was carried out with holy Raptures; I know not where I was, (saith he) whether I was in the body, or was taken out of the body, I cannot tell, the Lord he knows; and therefore still I say there is no cause why any of Gods people should inordinately fear affliction seeing you may meet with the presence of Christ

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in that condition, and the presence of Jesus Christ, will countervail the loss of all Creature comforts, and the sweetness of it will be equivalent to the bitterness of it, let thy condition be never so low: That's the third Use.

Fourthly, Let the people of God expect the presence of Christ in their affliction, in their low condition; seeing Christ hath promised his presence, do you expect his presence, look for his presence: Oh that we might labour to improve our affliction for this end, that we may meet with more of Christ, that we may enjoy more of the presence of Christ in our affliction; truly there is a great deal lost, Gods people loose abundance of sweetness which they might enjoy both in Ordinances and in affliction, if their hearts were raised up to look for the performance of that which Christ hath promised; if we would believe that Jesus Christ will be as good as his word; did our souls expect the fulfilling of this word, that we shall see the presence of Christ in affliction; why then should we be so loth to suffer for Christ, and be unwilling to submit to low conditions, seeing it is the will of God that we should suffer? Therefore I beseech you, you that are the people of God, get your hearts enlarged in affliction, that so you may go above your affliction, if that you shall certainly meet with the presence of Jesus Christ in your afflicted conditions; he hath spoken it, he hath given out the word, and therefore he will fulfil it; what confidence had the people of God in their affliction, when they remembred this? I will fear no evil, though I walk in the

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the valley of the shadow of death; And see what *David* saith, in the 27. *Psalm*, the beginning of it, *The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom should I fear, the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom should I be afraid?* I cannot tell who the enemy is, who is it? he looks and he frides none in all the world, whom should I fear, and be afraid of? so long as the Lord is with me, I see no such enemy; and therefore I beseech you that you would look after the presence of Christ expect the presence of Christ in all your afflictions that you meet with.

Object. *But you will say, I have no such word as* David *had*, David *might well believe that the Lord would uphold him; for* David *had a particular word. God spake to* David, *he sware to* David, *He swore by his Holiness that he would not fail David; and so others of the Saints, they had a particular word. the Lord spake to* Joshua, Fear not, I will not leave thee, be couragious, *but we have no such word, and therefore how should we expect to meet with Christ in afflicted conditions.*

Answ. I Answer first of all, Though God does not speak now from Heaven by Visions, he doth not reveal himself by *Urim* and *Thumim*, as unto *David*: yet we have a larger word then *David* had, and *Joshuah* had; the Scripture is larger now, we have abundance of the word; there was but little of the Scripture writ in *Davids* time, and less in *Joshuah's* time, there was none of the written word but only the Book of *Moses*; but now we have the word of God compleat, we have a sure word, a large word,

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and 'tis full of gracious invitations and incouragements; and therefore the Saints now may be incouraged as well as they to whom God spake.

Secondly, You Secondly I say, God hath sent forth more of his spirit now in a Gospel way, in a way of Gospel dispensation, there is a great deal more of the Spirit of Christ poured out. Now 'tis the work of the Spirit, the Office of the Spirit, to particularize those promises to the soul, to take the promises and bring them home to this and that particular soul. Now where the Spirit of God comes, he comes with evidence, and he brings home the word of grace to the soul, that the soul cannot gainsay it, nor resist it.

Object. *But you will say, How shall I know 'tis the Spirit of God that doth speak to me?*

Answ. I Answer, The Spirit of God always speaks according to the word of God; I say, it speaks according to the written word that is given to us, it speaks according to the word of grace, for the spirit and the word do bear mutual testimony one of another.

But I Answer, 'Tis in the power of the Spirit to resolve the soul; the Lord Jesus sends forth the Spirit with so much evidence, as to convince the heart that it is the spirit that speaks; the Lord Jesus he is able to persuade the soul that it is not a delusion; but speaking according to the word of grace, it is indeed the voice of the Father, the voice of the Spirit that speaks.

Object. *But you will object further; If the Lord Jesus be present with me according to his promise; if the Lord were present with me in affliction; why had it it possible that it should be thus with me as it is? How it*

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o possible that there should be so much deadness, and so much of the world, and unbelief? Surely the presence of Christ is not with me in my affliction.

Answ. I Answer to such a poor soul, that looks after the presence of Christ, and fain would enjoy the presence of Christ, but cannot see him in affliction;

I say first of all, Undoubtedly there is the presence of Christ with thee, and thou canst not but thou mayst see something, if unthankfulnesse doth not lye before thine eyes; he is there, the Lord Jesus is there, and he will make good his word; certainly if he hath promised to be with his people in afflicted conditions, he will make good his word; and he is with thee at the door, though he may be behind the Curtain, and undoubtedly he is not far; as I said before, *Joseph* was with his Brethren when they did not know him; and so the Lord Jesus is present with his people, and they do not see him, he doth feed them, support them, and maintain their lives, and they not know it.

Secondly, Yea I say secondly, That if thou dost not see more of the presence of Christ, the fault is in thee, 'tis not in the Lord, not in the word of the Lord, he is present according to the word that he hath spoke; and therefore Christ may be present and thou forest him not because through negligence thou dost not stir up thy self to take hold of him, thou givest way to a slothful spirit, and so thou dost not stir up thy self to take hold of him, or else thou dost not exercise faith in thy afflicted condition, and then no wonder though Christ be with thee, and thou forest him not; Faith is the eye of the soul, and if that be shut Christ may stand at the right hand and the soul not discern him; and therefore I say, stir

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up thy faith, go to the Lord to strengthen thy faith, and stir up thy faith, Faith shews Christ, represents Christ to the soul; Faith takes hold of Christ, and brings the sweetness and the comfort of his presence to your souls.

Or it may may be 'tis through unthankfulnesse, that thou dost not see the presence of Christ, thank thine unthankful hours; I tell thee, thou hast a great deal of thanks to give, and thou sayst Christ is not with thee: who is it that supported thee? who is it that put under his hand? was there not a strength in thee then in others? Surely there was an everlasting Arm put under to support thee in thine afflictions; and is not here matter of thankfulnesse? And this you may be sure, all you people of God, the heart of God is always towards you; though his face is not towards you, his hand may seem to be against you, yet his heart is always towards you; and therefore still, I say, the people of God ought to expect that they shall see and enjoy the presence of Christ, and shall meet with him in every affliction.

Fiftly and Lastly, What cause of thankfulness is here? What cause hath the people of God to be thankful to Christ that hath made this comfortable provision for them (as this?) that he is pleased to walk in such a gracious way; and as afford them most of his presence at that time that they stand most in need of it? Not is matter of thankfulness that the Lord should not leave you alone, but afford you his presence? Here is matter of thankfulness that the Lord Jesus should not leave you alone in your [illegible] condition? Or is [illegible] condition to be left alone? [illegible]

faith

saith the wise man, if a man fall and be alone who shall help him up? and how miserable had it been if we had been left alone in such conditions, in afflicted conditions, when we were fallen low? but the Lord hath not left his people alone.

Nay, here is further matter of Thankfulness, that he should afford his own presence to his people; If the Lord had sent a Messenger to comfort a poor afflicted Creature, we should have thought it a great mercy; but that he should afford his own presence in affliction, that he should come himself to support and strengthen, what a double mercy is this? This is more then if he had sent twelve Legions of Angels to comfort in afflicted conditions. Oh what is the presence of Christ? 'tis the greatest good in the world, 'tis life eternal, 'tis the beginning of Heaven, and shall be the fulness of Heaven hereafter; the fulness of joy, in the presence of Christ, it shall be the greatest misery to loose the presence of Christ; and therefore that is a most dreadful threatning, when God doth threaten to depart from a people, see how God doth threaten *Jerusalem*, in *Jeremiah* 6. 8. *Be thou instructed, Oh Jerusalem, least my soul depart from thee, least I make thee a desolate land, not inhabited, Least my soul depart from thee*: Now when God departs, what follows? nothing but desolation; So in the Prophet *Hosea*, see there what a dreadful threatning 'tis for God to depart, in *Hosea* 9. 12. *Though they bring up their children yet will I bereave them, that there shall not be a man left; yea we also to them when I depart from them*: There is all threatnings summed up in this, and more cannot be said (yea woe them when I depart from them.) You see it will be the greatest evil in the world to be shut out from the presence

of God it shall be the Torment in Hell to depart from Christ; Why then 'tis the greatest mercy to enjoy the presence of Christ; if God go away, all blessings go away with him; *Wo to them if I depart*, now on the contrary, when the Lord Jesus comes unto a soul, all blessings come along with him; when Christ comes to a poor afflicted creature, Oh what sweetness comes along with Christ? there is comfort, and there is refreshment, there is grace, [illegible] is holiness, and there is support, there is [illegible] light, all come along with the presence of Christ.

Object. *Ay but if I could finde the [illegible] of these, may some soul say, I shall labour to [illegible] Christ, if I could finde these effects of Christs presence, [illegible] I may be comforted, but alass I finde [illegible] effect of his presence, and how then should I think it [illegible] presence that is with me?*

Ans. I say Believe; Believe that Christ is present with thee; I speak to every soul that hath made a close with Jesus Christ in the tenders of grace; I say, 'tis thy duty to believe that he is with thee in thy afflicted condition; Believe it, though thou [illegible] not the effects of his presence, and that is the way to [illegible]; believe that he is present according to his word, and through the grace of God, thou shalt see the effect of his presence; only Christ would have us to believe his word, Christ would have thee believe that he keeps time and place with them, and that he is with them in afflicted conditions; [illegible] deals with his people as *Job's* friends dealt with him, they came to visit *Job* in his affliction, but sate them down seven days, and spake not a word unto *Job*, and at last they found an opportunity to speak; even so doth Jesus Christ, it may be he may sit seven days and not speak

a word to his people, he may come to the soul, and not speak a word to the soul in an afflicted condition; all the time he sits by them, and looks on them, and his heart is toward them, and his bowels relent, and he will break out at last, and he will speak unto them; it was long ere *Joseph* did reveal himself to his brethren, when they were in straits, but at last he breaks out, and says he, *I am your brother*; and so the Lord Jesus he may sit long before he speaks a word; Oh but at last he will break out, and then shalt thou see that Christ was present with thee, and therefore 'tis thy duty to believe that the Lord Christ is with thee in thy affliction, though thou seest him not, though he be behind the Curtain; and believe that thou shalt see the effect of his presence, he will not go away and leave no blessing behind him; surely where he comes he brings a gift with him, he does not come empty; and therefore believe that thou shalt see a blessing left behind; it may be thou mayst not see the gracious effects of the presence of Christ in thee, but believe the time is coming when thou shalt see; a friend may come with a Present to a friend, but not presently give it him, it may be he will sit with him a long time, and when he is ready to go away he will give the gift to him; and so the Lord Jesus Christ, he never comes empty, and he comes and sits long before he gives out that grace, that strength, that comfort, that is in his hand ready to give, but undoubtedly Christ will give it before he goes away; and therefore 'tis the duty of all his people to wait upon him for the giving of that grace that he hath promised to their souls; and therefore when Christ comes to a soul, manifesting of himself is expressed to the soul by his supping with the soul, see Rev. 3. 20. Be-

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behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me: If any man open the door, I will come in and sup with him; he doth not say, I will come in and break-fast with him, or Dine with him, no, he shall have my comforts before I go away, though I be at the last Meal, I will be sure to sup with him, though he break his fast with fowre herbs and dine with fowre herbs, yet I will be sure to sup with him, and he with me; before I go away I will open my Secrets, and pour out my Flagons of Wine, and he shall take of my Dainties before I go; and therefore the Martyrs cryed out, *He is come, he is come*, meaning the glorious presence of Christ to their souls; the Lord Jesus will at last manifest himself to his people, and his presence with them in their afflicted conditions, according to his word: and 'tis the Lord Jesus his will, that his people should expect his presence, though he do not give it out to them presently, yet wait for it, and he will abundantly satisfie your souls before he goes away.

FINIS.

FINIS.

A Sermon Preached in *Norwich*, upon the day of the Mayors entring into his Office.

Eccles. 9. 10.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdome in the grave, whither thou goest.

We shall not seek far for the sence of the words, we shall finde the sence in themselves: Some conceive that *Solomon* spake in the person of the natural man, or the Atheist, who keep this Counsel; *Follow after the world, enjoy thy pleasure and thy profit, and do it with all thy might, for thou hast so long time to injoy them in; there is no thing in the grave, and therefore now take thy fill.* But I rather conceive that *Solomon* spake here as a *Prophet*, in the person of a *Prophet*, and spiritual man, and gives better Counsel then this, from the seventh *verse*, unto the end of the

Chapter. He gives advice in the seventh verse, to take the comforts of those things that God hath given: And upon this Account, *Because the Lord accepts thy works: Go thy way, eat thy Bread with joy, and drink thy Wine with a merry heart, for God now accepts thy works*: And so in the ninth verse; *Live joyfully with thy Wife whom thou lovest, all the days of the life of thy vanity*; not with the Harlot, as the Atheist would have spoken; but with the wife whom thou lovest: And so also this Counsel in the Text, seems to be given by *Solomon*, in the person of a spiritual man: *Whatsoever thy hand finds to do, do it with all thy might, for there is no working in the Grave*, &c.

The wise man here gives counsel unto all men to improve the time of life, he calls all men to activity in the time of life: And first he declares wherein men ought to be active, *Whatsoever thy hand findes to do*: Whatsoever is in thine hand to do (as some read it) Whatsoever God puts into thy hand to do, in thy general or particular Calling, more especially in the great Affairs that do concern the world to come, whatsoever thy hand finde to do in relation unto the state of Eternity, whatsoever thy hand finde to do; a man finds that sometime which he seeketh, and sometimes that which he seeketh not: After thou hast sought out the mind of God, and dost know what is his will concerning thee; when thy hand hath found out what to do, then do it with thy might; or if the Lord shall prevent thee with his goodness, and shall discover his will to thee, when thou soughtest not after it; Oh then give up thy self to work the work of God, and do it with all thy might: And then he shews in the

the second place, how men must work these works of God; *do it with all thy might*, with all diligence, with all faithfulness; lay forth thy self to the very utmost for God; do it with thy might: This he presseth with two Arguments.

First, *There is no work in the grave*, there is no work to be done there, that is the place of rest, there is no possibility of working; if thou wouldst work afterward, thou canst not, thou shalt not be able to work, there is no possibility of working for God, and for thy soul, when once in the grave; there is no believing, there is no repenting, there is no turning to God, when once in the grave; if it be not done before thou comest there, it is like to be undone for ever; *There is no work in the Grave.*

And secondly, as there is no work in the grave, so *there is no device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom*, there is no means to accomplish work; if there were any work to be done in the grave, there is no means to accomplish this work, there is no knowledge in the grave. This Argument is further backed by the consideration of the haltening of that estate of death, where there shall be no possibility of working, there is no work in the grave *whither thou goest*: He doth not say there is no work as the in the grave whither thou shalt go; but whither thou goest, thou hadst need make haft; for thou art going Thou, and Thou, and every one, thou goest to the grave, thou art making post haft thither, thou art going every moment, thou art every moment stepping over the Threshold of Eternity: And therefore the Result of all is this.

Whatsoever God shall lay before thee to be thy

work, whatsoever thou hast to do for God, or for thy soul, in the great business of Eternity, do not dally with it, do not defer it, do not put it off, there is no work in the grave, there is no possibility of working there: If thou wouldst, there is no means to accomplish work there: And this condition is hastning upon thee, thou art stepping into the grave every moment, thither thou goest; therefore he saith, what thou doest, *do it with thy might.*

I shall fasten upon this one consideration to prosecute at this time.

Observat. *That it concerns every living man to do with his might, whatsoever he hath to do for God, or for his own soul, in that great business that doth concern Eternity.*

It concernes every living man and woman, to do with all their might, what ever they have to do with all their might, whatever they have to do for God, or for their own souls in the great business that doth concern Eternity.

I shall here shew you, First, what it is for a man to do with his might.

Secondly what are those things that God requires of every one of you to be done with your might; And that will make way for the Application.

First of all, What is to do with thy might?

To do *with thy might*; First, is to do with *diligence*, to do *diligently*, to take all opportunities of doing for God; yea seek opportunities, not only embrace opportunities, but seek opportunities of doing for God: Our Lord Jesus Christ went up and down doing good, in the days of his flesh; he

he sought opportunities to serve his Father, and to serve the sons of men.

The Sun carries his light up and down the world, and visits poor Creatures that are in darkness; when a man is faithful in taking opportunities to do for God, in seeking opportunities, when a man works with diligence, then he works with his might.

Again secondly, *To do with thy might*; to do with a mans might, is to do or work *resolutely*; to do with resolution, not to be beaten back by discouragements, and by opposition, that doth lye in the way; never did any work meet with so much opposition, as the great work of our Redemption by Christ; But he brake through Divels and all the powers of darkness that were in his way, he did with his might the work of his Father, for he did it with resolution: To go on notwithstanding all storms, all winds that blow, though never so many dangers lay in a mans way, though there seem to be Lions in the way, great enemies, great persecutions, losse of name, losse of estate, losse of friends, to go through evil report, as well as good, to break through the strife of Tongues, and the strife of hands: This is to work Resolutely, this is to do with a mans might.

Again thirdly, to do with a mans might, is to do *faithfully*; when a man works faithfully, and sincerely, when he doth not warp nor turn aside, when he is not byassed nor drawn by the allurements of the world: In the 33. of *Deut.* it is said, that *Levi did not know his own Father, nor his own Mother, nor his children*: he did the work of God with all his might, for he did it faithfully: And

when the cause of God was in hand, he knew no friend, he knew not his Father, he knew not his children; *Get thee behind me Satan*, saith Christ to *Peter*, a dear friend, a chosen Disciple; yet when *Peter* will dissuade Christ from doing the work of his Father, *Peter* is a Satan, he is an adversary; *get thee behind me Satan*. And so, *what do you mean to vex my heart?* saith *Paul*, when his friends dissuaded him, *I am ready not only to be bound, but to dye at Jerusalem for the name of Christ*. When a man works faithfully, then he works with his might.

Fourthly, when a man works *spiritually*, then he works with his might: When his heart goes into the work, when the spirit goes into the work, when a man is content not only to give God the outside, but his heart shall be engaged, and that shall bow to God, and submit to Christ: If he do not find that his heart and spirit is engaged in the work; he cannot be satisfied: It is said of good *Josiah*, in the 2 of Kings, 23. vers. 25. there was none like to him, there was none like before him, *that turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might*: He turned with his heart and soul, his heart and Spirit was engaged in it; and therefore now he did it with his might.

Fiftly, when a man works with his might he works *speedily*; I say speedily: Our Lord Jesus did the work of his Father with his might, and he began betimes, in the morning; he was called *the Hind in the morning*; he was hunted betimes in the morning; he began betimes to work the works of his Father: When he was thirteen years of age, he was found disputing among the Doctors, and saith he, *wist you not that I must do the work of my Fa-*

Father? To begin betimes in the day of youth, to take the best season, the fittest opportunity to do for God; when a man doth speedily, then he doth with his might.

Sixthly, When a man doth *strenuously*, when he doth with all his strength, with all those abilities God hath given him; when he is content that God should have all that he hath; that God should serve himself of the best he hath, and rejoyce that he hath any thing for God; when a man lays down himself, and lays down all at the foot-stool of God, & saith, Lord take me, and take mine, and improve me to the utmost of thy self; in matters not what become of the Creature, so God may be glorified; when a man works thus, he works *strenuously* and with all his might.

Seventhly and lastly, when a man works *constantly*: When a man holds out unto the end, when he is willing to abide with Jesus Christ, yea to abide with Christ in his tribulation; when he is willing to serve the Lord all the six days of his life; when he is content that his works and his life should be finished together, and not one before the other: Thus it was with our Lord Jesus Christ when he was upon the Cross, his work and his life were finished together. when a man works thus to the end, this man works with his might. That is the first Particular, we hasten to the second: You have heard what it is for a man to work with his might.

The second follows: *What those things are that every man ought to do with his might.*

I shall speak first to *Sinners*, and then to *Believers*, and shew both their works: Something the

Lord requires of both to be done thus, with all their might.

What the work of sinners is to be done with their might.

If Sinners ask what is their work? I answer; First, their work is *to know themselves*: To know that they are poor and miserable, blind and naked, that they are lost and undone; that they are without light, and without life, and without strength, and without hope for eternity; that they have sinned, and cannot satisfie; that they have lost themselves, and cannot return of themselves; that they have done evil, and cannot do better of themselves: If free-grace do not prevent them, they are as poor wandring sheep upon the Mountains; they are like to wander, and wander, and wander for ever, till they be separated everlastingly from the Lord, if the good Shepherd of souls do not go forth to seek and save them: That is the first thing that doth concern them to know, seek after this knowledg, and that speedily, with all your might.

Secondly to know the Lord Jesus; it concerns the sinner to search after the knowledg of Christ, to know that he is the only Mediator between God and man; to know that all pardon, all peace, and all grace, and all strength, and all holinesse, it must come in through the blood of Jesus Christ; that this Lord Jesus is freely held forth to lost sinners; he is tendred by free promise, or Covenant of grace: and that men are invited every where to return to the Lord, to deny themselves, their own works, their own righteousnes, their own worthinesse, and to submit to the righteousnesse of the Son of God, that everlasting righteousnes that Jesus Christ hath brought in by his blood. To seek after this knowledg of Jesus Christ, is the second great

great work that sinners have to do.

Thirdly, To beleeve in Jesus Christ; this is an other work: To believe in the name of Jesus Christ, Oh this is the great work! when poor sinners came to Christ, and askt him what work they should do: How they should work the works of God? he tells them, that this is the work of God, *To beleeve in the Name of Jesus Christ*, Joh. 6. 29. this is the work of God, this is the great work, the first work, all other works are not accepted, till this be done: This is the first born of graces, this is the beginning of the souls strength; and till this be done, all other works are lost, because, *without faith, it is not possible to please God*; All the time of their continuance in unbelief in the wilderness, it was a time of temptation and provocation; this is the great work, the work of God, which meets with most opposition; all within a man, and all the powers of darkness do make against it; and therefore it concerns poor sinners to seek after this great work of God, with all their might; they can never begin too soon, never begin too speedily; it is a mighty work, if you had hundreds of years to live, you would finde time little enough to beleeve in, to exercise faith in. I shall go no further with sinners, for till this work is done, nothing is accepted. And therefore, Oh that God would perswade the hearts of poor sinners to know that this is their work, To know themselves, and to know Christ, and to beleeve in his Name! Oh that the Lord would stir them up to seek after it with their might!

What Beleevers must do with their might.

But what is the work of Beleevers? What must they do with their might?

First of all, To seek after further knowledge of their

their God, and Communion with him, acquaintance with him, fellowship with him; to know more of him in his Attributes, in his Son, in his Word, the mysteries of his Kingdome; to know the truth of the Times, the will of God concerning you. Oh, this is a great work, it concerns you to seek after this with all your might: to wait upon God in all means for it.

To wait at wisdoms Posts, to climbe upon every Sycamore Tree, where Jesus Christ is wont to pass by; to set your soule under every Golden-Pipe, where there is saving knowledge of Christ to be Communicated to you, or further acquaintance with God; Breath more after him, thus did *David*, in Psal. 63. *O God thou art my God, early will I seek thee, my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty Land, where no water is*; He doth not only thirst; but he longs: Now longing is a mighty strong desire; How dangerous is it to the Creature, if longing be not satisfied? With this desire of longing was *Davids* soul carried after further acquaintance with God, further enjoyment of him; That's the first.

Secondly, The second work that you have to do with your might, you that have interest in Christ, is to get your hearts fully rooted, and fully established upon the promises, that you may not be left at uncertainties in the great matters of your everlasting welfares; to get your hearts built, I say, established upon the Promises, rooted in Christ, to get your Acquittance cleered up to you, cleerly written, and wait till the Lord shall teach you to read it; that you may be able to say as the Apostle, in *Rom.* 8. 33. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge*

charge of Gods Elect? it is God that justifieth, it is Christ that dyed, and is risen again, and sits at the right hand of God, and makes intercession for us; I say, you had need be perfect in your evidence for Heaven; there may come a time of darkness, black clouds may come over all your comforts, and present enjoyments: a black night of temptation may be upon you, the Divel may cast a mist before your eyes; and therefore you had need be perfect to read your evidence for Heaven, that you may be able to read, and to know your interest in Christ, in such a condition as that is: Oh do this, make haste to do this, do it with your might.

Third To serve God in your generation, is another work you have to do with your might; to serve God in your generation is that you have to do, and Oh that you would do it with all your might, to honour and lift up God upon earth, to make him glorious, to lift him up by your praises, to lift him up by your conversations, by your obedience, by your shining in the midst of a crooked and sinful generation: The Lord he hath put his Name upon you Christians for this end; he put his Spirit into you to inable you to this: He expects more from you then from others; the eyes of the world are upon you, and God shall either reap honour, or dishonour by you; therefore it concerns you, I say, to do the work of your generation with all your might, to seek wherein you may be serviceable to the Lord how you may advance his Name: That is the third work, to lift up God by the service of your Generation.

Fourthly, It concerns you to get your hearts made sensible of the perishing condition of the Creature,

Creature, of the fading condition of all things under the Sun, that you are fading Creatures, your life fades, and comforts fade: The Lord would have you seek with all your might, to have such impressions as these made upon your spirits: 'tis a hard matter to receive them; and therefore God bids the *Prophet* cry, in Isa. 40. *The voice says cry, What shall I cry? all flesh is grass, and the glory of it as the flower in the field, the grass withereth, and the flower fadeth.* The Prophet must cry, and cry again, before men will hear this, before this impression will be made upon the spirits of men, That they are fading men, and their comforts are fading; That they are as grass, and their comforts as the grass: You had need live in a continual converse with your fading condition, dye daily, see death at a distance, and grapple with death at a distance: Put your selves into a dying condition, and say often, Oh! what if this were my last? What if I were now to breath forth my soul? What if now to shoot the Gulf of Eternity? What have I now to rely upon? What have I to carry me through? How shall death be conquered? How shall the sting be taken out for me? You had need I say, converse with death at a distance, and live continually in the sence of your dying condition; that so death may not be terrible when it comes, that you may know before hand how to conquer it, and that it is conquered by the blood of the Lamb.

Fiftly, Another work that you have to do with your might, is to do good to your friends, and to your Relations. Christians, give out the good things to your Relations, and do it speedily, do it with all your might: Impart the knowledge of God

God to your Relations, Christ finds *Andrew*, and *Andrew* finds *Simon Peter*; Christ finds *Philip*, and *Philip* finds *Nathaniel*; *Oh come, saith he, we have found the Saviour, the Messias.* 1 Joh. 41.45. You have but a little while to be with your Relations, and they are gone, they are taken from you, and you from them; and therefore with all your might work this work, and do them good, and give out good to your Relations. That is the fifth work that you have to do with all your might.

Sixthly, In all your waitings upon God, see that you do there with your might; I say, when ever you wait upon God in every Duty, in every Ordinance, whensoever you draw nigh to God, the Lord requires you should do it with your might. In the second of *Samuel*, the 13. it is said there, that *David* when he danced before the Ark, *he did it with all his might*: And so in the second of *Chron.* 28. It is said there, that *David* when he offered unto the Lord, he *offered with all his might*. And so that place, in 2 *King.* 23. and 25. It is said that King *Josiah* turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his might; what ever you do in the matters of God, do it not lazily: If you pray, do it with your might, and if you hear, let it not be done, but with all your might; and if you speak, do with your might; because these are mighty things, and they have relation to the business of Eternity.

Seventhly and Lastly; To mortifie your corruptions, to get your lusts mortified, subdued, cast out, your souls more conformable to Christ; this is an other work, and the last work that I shall name, that you Christians and Beleevers have to do, and

that

that with your might: To get your lusts mortified, and subdued; Do it with your might, do not look upon it as an easie matter, as a frivolous business; Do not go out against such Giants with straw and Bulrush: But Oh! get the compleat Armour of God, go forth in the name of Christ, in the strength of Christ, with the blood of Christ, with with the promises of Christ, it is a work of great concernment; and therefore I beseech you do it in good earnest, go out in the Name of the Lord, and do this great work in good earnest, that your corruptions may be mortified, and more of the Image and likenesse of Christ may be imprinted upon your Spirits. And thus have I shewed you (my Brethren) what it is for a man to do with his might, and what are those works the Lord puts into your hands to do with all your might: You have heard what works are put into the hands of sinners, and what works are put into the hands of Beleevers: And now I shall make some short Application, and I have two words to speak.

First, The one a word of Caution and Direction. The other a word of Exhortation.

First in the first place, a word of Caution and Direction is needful; and let this be the first Caution.

That though God call upon you to work with your might, yet he doth not put you upon it, to work to pay your debt, To discharge that great debt of ten thousand Talents of transgressions: My Brethren, if you had a thousand hands to work with, if you could work as much as the very Angels, it is not possible you should work so much as should discharge the debt: for you could not pay

the

the least farthing of that which is owing to God; No, know my Brethren, the Father of mercies hath pittyed poor Creatures, he sent his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ for this end, to marry poor Widdow-souls, that were left in an infinite debt, and could not discharge it; he hath sent his Son to to pay the debt of every widdow-soul, that is content to be espoused to Christ; he came from Heaven for this end, he wrought with his hands, he had no other way to pay the debt, he left himself poor; *The Lord Jesus was rich, but for your sakes he became poor*; he had no way to pay the debt, but by working with his hands; he wrought hard, he wrought till he swear, he wrought till he sweat drops of water and blood; he wrought three and thirty years together, that he might pay this great debt that was owing, that his people did owe to the Father. And therefore take heed you do not go about to work to discharge your own debt: do not work to pay your debt; but work because your debt is paid and discharged by Jesus Christ.

Secondly, Take heed you do not work for your living; God calls upon you to work with your might, but he does not put you upon it to work for your living: Life is not from your works, neither should Christians live upon their works; The life of your joy, and the life of your peace; the life of your comforts, the life of your righteousnes, it is not from your works, the Lord never put you upon it, to work for this end: no, Christ hath wrought enough for his people, that they might live as his people: he hath provided for their maintenance, to fill their cup; he hath provided for their cloathing; he put mighty righteousnes, ever-

everlasting righteousness upon you; It is not now to do, and live, this is not the Covenant. But the Covenant of grace is, *live and do*: fetch life from Christ, and then do, and do with all your might, because life is given freely by Christ.

Thirdly, God doth not put you upon it to work to purchase love, to purchase favour, or to purchase Heaven: I say, you are not to work to purchase the favour of God by your works, to purchase Heaven by the works of your hands; Alas *Adam* in innocency could not do it: he could not yearn life by working: And how shall poor Creatures in a fallen estate be able to purchase, and yearn life by their own works? No, if you will seek salvation by works, you rest upon your works; and if you rest upon your works, you break your works, and both you and your works are like to be lost for ever: and therefore know my Brethren, you are to do your utmost for God; if you could do ten thousand times more, all is too little for God: But know, that life and salvation is not purchased by your doing; work as much, and do as much for God, be as diligent in doing the work of God as if life were to be purchased by works; but when you have done your utmost, renounce all, and know, that by your own works you are no more nigh to Heaven then the very Publicans and Harlots; It is by the door of grace only, that you must enter into life: That is the third.

Fourthly, When God calls you to work with your might, he does not call you to work with your own strength: I beseech you take this Caution along with you, that poor Creatures may not think that they are able to do that which they are called upon

upon to do: I say, the Lord does not call you to work in your own strength; And therefore know, that without Christ you can do nothing; you are not fit for the least work, for the least duty: All your sufficiency must come down from Heaven: you cannot beleeve, you cannot repent, you cannot obey, you cannot give glory to God, unless this power be given you from on high, you cannot move towards God in any gracious action, unless the Lord comes in with strength: O therefore, when ever you are to work for God, go and set your selves under the promise; the promise of strength and assistance, Go and look for strength to Christ; do not act in your own strength: Oh let your souls open to the breathings of the Spirit of Jesus Christ: The soul never acts graciously, but when it is acted by the Spirit of Christ: Oh know that you are as a Ship becalmed upon the Sea, and you cannot sayl, till the spirit breath upon you, and fill the sayle of your affections, and carry you Godward, and Heaven-ward; and therefore let Christ be your strength, wait for his strength, that you may say, *Now I live, and yet not I, but it is Christ that liveth in me*: I act, and yet not I, it is the Spirit of Christ that acts in me: I pray, and yet not I: I beleeve, and yet not I: I obey, and yet not I, it is the Spirit of Christ that acts in me, it is his strength that helps me. This is the fourth Caution: I beseech you take heed you do not work in your own strength; you will spoil your works.

Fifthly, Take this Caution, do not present your works your selves to God: When you

have done your work, go to Jesus Christ, and desire him to carry your works home: Christians know, it is not for you to carry your work home, it is the Office of Christ; and therefore make use of Christ, and say, Lord present this Sacrifice, this Duty; do thou wash it with thine own blood, and cover it with thine own righteousness: I tell you, your works are not pleasing, unless they come out of the hands of Jesus Christ; Christ must wash your works, and perfume your works, and sweeten your works, and present your works with acceptation to the Father; and therefore when you have wrought with all your might, let Jesus Christ present it to God your Father, and his Father.

Sixtly, Take heed that when you work with all your might, you work not for your own end: I tell you, good works may be spoiled if you work for your own end, if self come in: a man may work the work of a Magistrate, or the work of a Minister, but if self come in, if vain glory be his end, if the praise of men, if his own profit: If the glory of God be not the end he propounds to himself, that man will be called by Christ another day, *a worker of iniquity: We have cast out Devils in thy name*, and yet saith Christ to them, *I know you not, depart from me, ye workers of iniquity* Oh this is the dead fly that spoils the Box of Ointment, when a man does it for vain glory, to be seen of men, to get a name in the world, and to raise their estates in the world, when they do publique works for private ends; how ever it seems to be glorious, it is abhomi-

hominable, and therefore when ever you work for God, make God your principal: Begin in his strength, and end for his glory.

The second word, is a word of Exhortation, and I will conclude with that; let me speak in my former order, first to Sinners, and then to Beleevers, and I will be but short.

First to Sinners, You that have not yet wrought the work of God; you that have not given up your names to Christ, in whose heart the great work of faith is not yet wrought, You that are found this day working the works of darkness, the works of iniquity; Let me speak a word to you, let me reason with you thus, in the name of the Lord Jesus, my Master, and yours: What do you think of it my dear friends? does it not concern you? Is not this a work put into your hands, to seek after an interest in Jesus Christ? to beleeve in his name, to give up your selves unto him? is not this work that is put into your hands, that God hath given you to do in this moment of your life? Doth it not concern you to beleeve in the name of Christ, think you? *Without faith it is not possible to please God*: If you be found in a way of unbelief, you are found in the way of wrath: It is said the wrath of the Lord does hang over the heads of unbeleevers; If in a state of unbelief, you are in an estate of wrath; if in an estate of unbelief, you are lost, and your works are lost; whatsoever you do without faith, your works cannot be accepted; *without faith you cannot please God*, without faith you cannot enter into life: And now what think

you my dear friends, is it not a work that concerns you, to seek after faith in Jesus Christ? If you grant it, let me further urge it upon you; Oh if this be your work, then do it with your might: Oh that the Lord would stir up your hearts to do it with your might; There is but a moment to seek faith in, there is but a moment to seek after an interest in Christ; and if this be not done now, O when shal it be done? If it be not done now, it is like to be undone for ever: there is no work in this kind in the grave; there is no repenting in the grave, no beleeving in the grave; there is no turning to God in the grave: Oh that the Lord would perswade your hearts of a necessity of seeking after Christ, and getting an interest in him; and do it I beseech you speedily, and diligently; the Lord hath put it into your hand, and therefore now seek after an interest in Christ with all your might.

To you that have an interest in Christ, I shall say no more, but what I said before: I laid you your work before you, get more acquaintance with God; get your hearts established upon the truth of the promises, that you may not be left at uncertainties; and lift up God in your generations; and get your hearts made sensible of your frailty, to dye daily, to wait upon God with all your might in Ordinances; to get your hearts subdued, and your corruptions mortified: This is your work; and Oh that the Lord would help you to do it with all your might.

To you that are the Fathers of the City:

I have one word to you from the Father of Hea-

Heaven: Oh that the Lord would make you willing to receive it, and to do it with all your might: There is something that is your work, that the Lord requires you should do with all your might: I shall but briefly give you a few hints, and shal leave it to the blessing of the Lord.

First of all, There is a work of *Judgment* and *Justice* that the Lord hath put into your hands: I say, the first work that God hath put into your hands, it is a work of Justice, to punish sin; to punish sin is the work that is in your hand to do, to punish the breaches of the moral Law, and the contempts thereof: that Law of nature which is written in the heart of all men, the Lord hath put it into your hand to punish the breach of this Law: What ever your hand finds to do in this case, I beseech you do it faithfully, do it with your might: God requires it of you, that you should do it with your might; yea let your hand find out sinners, let your hand do this work of the Lord, to punish the drunkards, and the swearers, and the prophane persons, the deceiver, the lyar, and the stealer, and all other workers of iniquity: here is no fear of smiting Christ; smite here and spare not; where there is no danger of smiting Christ, smite on and spare not, do it with all your might; the Lord lays it before you as your duty.

Secondly, There is a work of *Righteousness* and *Equity*, that the Lord puts into your hands to do: and Oh that you would do this also with all your might: to judge betwixt man and man; do it faithfully, to accept no mans person, to know

no friend in the matter of Justice, but to decide every mans cause with wisedom, and with faithfulnesse, and with sincerity; not to know Father, nor Brother, nor Son, nor Daughter, as *Levi* did not in the cause of God: That so Justice and Righteousnes may run down as a mighty stream: That there may be no oppression, that there may be no complaining in our streets; This is the second work that the Lord puts into your hand: And Oh that you would do it with your might.

The third work is a work of *Mercy*; There is a work of mercy; the Lord puts into your hands to relieve the poor, and the needy, and the fatherless, to take care that the poor be provided for, that they may have work, that they may have employment, and that they may have maintenance; this is a work of mercy, that the Lord puts into your hands to do: Oh it is one of the crying sins of *England*; it is the sin of the whole Land; and Oh that it were not the sin of this City, that the poor are not yet imployed and provided for; that God would put it into your hearts to do it: Oh that some blessed hand might find out this way to employ the poor; this would be an acceptable work of mercy: Know that the Lord hath given you something for the poor, though I think every man hath a propriety in his estate, yet I also think that God hath given every man something for the poor: and truly before God, the poor hath a right in it, though not to take, yet it is your duty to give, and to provide for them: And I fear if this work do not go through the whole land, that there be not some

some provision made for the work of the poor, and for the relief of the poor; That God will level this Land, and that God will bring down all the pomp and pride, and stain the glory of all flesh in it; this is a work of mercy.

There is a fourth work; and that is a work of *Piety* that God puts into your hand, to seek the good of poor souls; to provide that all that are under your power in this City, may be instructed in the knowledg of the Lord Jesus, to send into the dark corners, (the Suburbs of this City, and not only to confine men to the heart of the City) but send to them that will not come out for it: *The Lord Jesus came to seek as well as to save*; and therefore send forth to seek them; they know not what they do in rejecting the means of life: But Oh send to seek them, and instruct them in the knowledge of the Lord, that they may not perish for want of provision: And what though (my Fathers and Brethren) every man cannot see his way clear to take a Pastoral charge of such a people, where he knows there is but little of Christ, yet if he do the work, what though he do it not under that notion: If he preach Christ to them, if he bleed for them; If his desires be to instruct them, and be willing to instruct them in publique and private, and to pray for them, that the Lord would give them repentance, and bring them into the number of Christs Sheep-fold: I say, if this work be done, what though it be not done under that notion? why should the work of the Gospel be hindred? If in all other things men be conscientious, and

able, and fit to teach and instruct the people in the knowledg of Jesus Christ, this will be a work of Piety,, to send into the dark corners of the City, that there may be no place in which the word of the Lord shall not be heard.

There is a work of *Love to Christ*, and of *wisdome to your selves*, and I will name no more; I commend this to you, as the last; And Oh that your hand would finde to do it, a work of love to Christ, and of wisedom to your selves; And that is to *protect the Saints*, and those that have an interest in Christ, and desire to walk unblamably before you, if they be such as walk according to the Law of God, and not disobey the Law of Magistracy, it is the work of the Magistrates to protect them: The Magistrate is set up to be a praise to them that do well; What though they may differ from you in particular opinions? I am perswaded it will not excuse before Christ, not to have protected them: If you be convinced that they are such as fear the Lord, and desire to walk conscientiously, It is your work to be a wall to them, and to protect them, so they walk regularly, and in the fear of the Lord; The people of God, they are the strength of the Land, who ever they be, they are the strength of the Land, they are the strength of a City; They protect you, and therefore it is your work to protect them. The godly in a City, they protect the City, they are the safety of the City; God said he could not destroy *Sodom*, so long as *Lot* was there, and could do nothing so long as righteous *Lot* was among them; they are the strength of a City;

City: I beseech you see what is said in the second of *Zechariah*, verse 5. *And the Governours of Judah shall say in their hearts, the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord of Hosts their God*: Such as fear the Lord of all ranks, they are the strength of the City, and the time is a coming, when the Governours of *Judah* shall say so, *The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength, in the Lord of Hosts their God*; they have great interest in God, and therefore they are my strength, they are the strength of the Governours, and they are the strength of the City: And now let me say to you as *Paul* said to *Agrippa*, Beleeve you this? (Oh you Fathers of the City) do you beleeve this, that the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, they are your strength, and the strength of the City in the Lord of Hosts their God? do you beleeve this? I know you beleeve it, the Lord will cause you all to beleeve it, people of God, what ever they be, they are strength of the City: you shall say it one day, the Governors of *Judah* shal say *That the Inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in the Lord of Hosts their God*: And now I have humbly presented this Counsel, as from the Lord: I have laid before you what is your work,

1. There is a Work of *Justice*,
2. A Work of *Equity*.
3. A Work of *Mercy*.
4. A Work of *Piety*.
5. A Work of *Love to Christ* in the protection of his people; And a work of *Wisdom* to your selves, which will be your strength.

And

And now let me say to all Christians, and Christian Magistrates; Let me say to you all, what ever is your work, what ever is in your hand to do; Oh that the Lord would help you to do it with all your might: What is in your hand to do as Christians, as Magistrates; Oh that the Lord would help you to do it with all your might! I shall not need to press it further upon you both, as Christians: The Devil worketh with all his might, and shall not Christians work with their might, and Magistrates work with their might? He goes about night and day seeking whom he may devour, and shall not you go about night and day, seeking whom you may save? And seeking whom you may punish, for contemning the Law of the Lord your God? The Divel compasses the earth, (*Whence comest thou? I come from compassing the earth*) And Oh shall not Christians [illegible] to all their might, when Satan doth with all his might? sinners do with all their might, and shall not Christians do with their might? It is said of sinners, *That they draw iniquity as with Cart-ropes*; It is the expression of the *Prophet*, and in the seventh of *Micah*, it is said, they sin with both hands; *they do evil with both hands*, aye, earnestly, and they do it with both hands; and if they sin with both hands, shall not Christians do good with both hands? Shall they sin with all their might, and shall not you do the work of God with all your might? Let me say further to you, Christ did the work of the Father with all his might, and your work with all his might, (the work of your salvation) he

be wrought three and thirty years together, he ſweat hard: And Oh! ſhall not you in a way of love, in a way of obedience, labour to do for God with all your might, ſeeing Chriſt hath done for you with all his might? Let me ſay to you, you are not put upon it, to work for life, and righteouſneſs, or for Heaven: but only to expreſs your thankfulneſſe, your love, and obedience; and therefore well may you work for God, you have a great deal of work, and you have but a little time to do it: Sinners you are haſtning to the grave: Oh work for God with all your might.

Chriſtians you are haſtning to the grave: Magiſtrates, you are haſtning to the grave; Oh then do what ever you find to do for God, with all your might: There is no work as a Magiſtrate nor as a Miniſter, nor as a Chriſtian, in the grave, whither thou art going; here is all the working time that you ſhall have for eternity, you have ſix days to work in: And you that are Beleevers, ſhall have a long reſt, you may well work a while, though you ſweat hard for it; there is no more time to work in, but a long time to reſt in, an everlaſting Reſt, eternity of Reſt, that ſhall never have an end: your reſt is long; And Oh make haſt, there is no poſſibility of working more for God hereafter: If you do not finiſh your work now, you cannot finiſh it in the grave: You had need work, the Candle is ſet up, and you have but little of the Candle left: Oh if you do not finiſh this work of God before this Candles end be out, there is nothing but darkneſſe

in

in the grave: *There is no wisedom, no device, &c:* If there were work, you could not see: But there is no beleeving, no repenting, no doing for God, no further time to be serviceable to God; but a time of receiving for the Saints, and a time for the wicked to be punished: And therefore, *What ever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor wisedom, in the grave, whither thou goest.*

And so much for this time.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAge 1. line 12. read *seemeth*. p. 4. l. 17. r. *bonds*. p. 5. l. 15. r. *all* p. 6. l. 10. r. *war*. p. 9. l. 22. r. *grave*. p. 12. l. 31. r. *the*. p. 16. l. 3. r. *they*, for *now*. p. 17. l. 28. r. *this*. p. 21. l. 15. blot out *as*, r. *in as dye*. p. 41. l. 26. r. *open*. p. 43. last *v*. r. *get*. p. 49. last *v*. blot out *time*. p. 68. l. 27. r. *grace* p. 73. l. 6. r. *whether*. p. 74. last *v*. r. *superstition*. p. 75. l. 7. r. *past*. and l. 9. r. *not*. p. 77. l. 13. r. *though*, and l. 25. r. *to*. p. 78. l. 18. r. *terrible*. and l. 30. r. *in a*. p. 81. l. 27. blot out *either*. p. 93. l. 25. r. *done*. p. 99. l. 6. r. *off*. and l. 28. r. *his*. p. 100. l. 3 and 4. blot out *the thoughts of*. p. 101. l. 5. r. *but* for *that*. p. 103. l. 30. r. *adversity*. p. 107. last line but one, r. *to us*. p. 115. l. 29. r. *whether*. p. 119. l. 10. r. *our*. p. 121. l. 22. r. *condition*. p. 125. l. 19. r. *comforting*. p. 130. l. 22. r. *Lo*, for *Low*. p. 132. l. 2. r. *quiet*. p. 133. l. 6. blot out *been*, and put it into the end of the next line, and l. 8. r. *Jonah*, last line but one, r. *improbable* for *impossible*. p. 135. l. 24. r. *so it* might. and l. 26. r. *keep*. p. 143. l. 18. r. without *God*. p. 144. l. 32. r. *encouragements*. p. 148. l. 28. r. *Father*. p. 149. l. 14. r. *they*, for *their*. and l. 16. r. *their* for *thy*. and l. 21. r. *contrary to their*. p. 150. l. 27. r. *deliver his poor*. p. 154. l. 23. r. *poor*. p. 156. last line but one, r. *art*. p. 160. l. 4. r. *be though*. p. 161. l. 22. r. *pure*. p. 162. l. 2. r. *Lord*. p. 164. l. 26. r. *Gods* p. 165. l. 17. r. *fed*. p. 166. last line, r. *need to*. p. 173. l. 5. *A Goldsmith*. p. 181. l. 11. r. *relations*.